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ABSTRACT

This resource book on rural administrative leadership is the result of 1988 interviews with school administrators involved in successful rural educational programs. The material is divided into eight chapters, each self-contained for separate use. Chapter 1, "Getting to Know the Community," addresses qualities of living and working in rural communities. It emphasizes that effective administrators are involved in community affairs, reflecting their commitment to rural community socialization. Chapter 2, "The Board/Administration as a Team and Respective Roles of the Team Members," emphasizes the importance of establishing roles, goals, and priorities with board of education members while working as a team. Successful administrator-board relations depend on understanding the expectations and respective roles within the leadership team. Chapter 3 identifies issues of leadership and different management styles. Although rural school boards may prefer one over another, the successful rural administrator needs qualities of both management and leadership. Chapter 4 examines decision-making and problem-solving principles, and includes action plans for analyzing problems and making decisions. Chapter 5, "Conflict Resolution," includes strategies for dealing with the "fishbowl" or "rumor factory" phenomenon often present in rural communities. Chapter 6 includes specific tips for stress and time management, critical skills for a successful administrator to handle multiple roles, expectations, and high visibility. Chapter 7 includes procedures to help the administrator build a vision for the rural school and to develop strategies for achieving that vision. Chapter 8 offers information for recruiting, inducting, and retaining effective rural teachers. (TES)

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Rural Administrative Leadership Handbook

PREPARED BY:

Carolyn Tift
Rural Education Specialist

EDITED BY:

Joyce Ley
Rural Education Specialist

RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Steve Nelson, Director

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204

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Jerry D. Kirkpatrick

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RURAL ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK

Prepared by:

Carolyn Tift
Rural Education Specialist

Edited by:

Joyce Ley
Rural Education Specialist

Rural Education Program
Steve Nelson, Director

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204

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This chapter addresses qualities of living and working in rural communities. Effective rural school administrators are involved and visible in community affairs. They understand and are committed to the socialization process of rural community life.

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PREFACE

Where does one start when given the task of summarizing research and practices on "rural administrative leadership"? This is a massive area with so many important issues that could and should be addressed. We needed a method to effectively narrow the scope of this subject. We believe rural school administrators themselves are the best sources of information on the topics to cover. Therefore, in the fall of I988 we contacted several individuals who were successfully involved with rural educational leadership and asked questions regarding what would be important for rural educational leaders to know. Thus, we came up with the topical units found in this resource book. It is written in self-contained chapters so that each chapter may be read as a need arises for that particular piece of information.

Networking with peers was listed by rural leaders as an important characteristic of a successful rural administrator. The rural administrative leaders felt a need to have people to call on for answers and support. It can be a very lonely job. As one rural administrator reflected, "Few people understand the feelings of having to deal with all they deal with except another rural administrator." Another rural leader commented, "Successful administrators better have an understanding of networking. They will need a strong cadre of individuals ranging from administrators in surrounding districts to those working with state agencies where answers can be obtained. Small district administrators must have the answers or know where to get them in a timely manner--they are expected to have the answers." The reader also may find it helpful to identify people with whom he/she can seek assistance and share ideas.

Chapter 1

Getting to Know the Community

"The successful administrator needs to be a good 'fit' to the community"

– Richard Carter
School superintendent

CHAPTER 1

GETTING TO KNOW THE COMMUNITY

We need to focus on the small schools and build the positives to entice future administrators into staying with small districts. The small/rural school has a uniqueness that not only is the essence of its community, but an integral part of the infrastructure of the statewide educational system.

Richard Carter, Superintendent
Carbonado (Washington) School District

Rural School Advocacy

So why are you a rural educational leader? One would hope that it is more than a place to gain experience on the journey to larger districts. Our rural areas can lay claim to a host of advantages for their residents, advantages unmatched in urban settings. Korte (1983) points to many: "Rural America is superior in its environmental qualities (clean air, noise levels, sometimes its pleasant climate, lower crime rate, favorable social atmosphere in the realm of neighbors and strangers and its general level of interpersonal trust...). Rural residents show a higher level of satisfaction with their standard of living, their environmental quality and the social atmosphere of their communities." Listed below are positive aspects offered by small rural schools (Jorgensen and Epsey, 1986):

- Absence of bureaucratic barriers, thus allowing more flexibility and quicker decision making
- Sense of community and family interdependence with the school
- The right size to give personal attention
- Slower pace of living and working
- Raising children in a more controlled environment
- Smaller classes

Because many rural schools have difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers, it is imperative that prospective teachers are reminded of the benefits.

D. Helge and L. Marrs, as cited by Jorgenson and Epsey (1986), suggest using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a structure for presenting to teachers the advantageous features of rural schools. This depiction can be expanded to include the special positive features of your school in particular.

Needs Areas Identified by Maslow and Attributes of Rural Communities

Maslow's needs areas:	Characteristics of rural communities:
Social needs	- friendliness of small communities - potential for status in small communities - teachers know each other better
Self-esteem needs	- flexible programming allows attention to one's special interests - small enrollments allow for more individual attention to students - get to know students better - easier to individualize instruction - more opportunities for alternative curriculum strategies - focus on quality education shared by the community
Self-actualization needs	- administrative support for professional growth and development - peer support environments - professional growth opportunities - teachers better able to take leadership roles - self-development opportunities, such as proximity to professional libraries or extended universities

In typically smaller rural schools, the teacher has more frequent interaction with each child and can get to know his or her special needs. Thus, the student benefits. Likewise, students are more likely to know their teachers better and have an opportunity for personal attention. Additionally, students are more likely to be influenced by the examples set by their teachers. (Note that this also is true in the administrator-teacher relationship.)

Herbert Walberg and William Fowler (1987) found that the smaller the district the higher the achievement when the social economic status and per-student expenditures are taken into account. They hypothesize this to be true because of the "superintendent and central office awareness of citizen and parent

preferences, the absence of bureaucratic layers and administrative complexity, teacher involvement in decision making and close home-school relations." Even though lower population density does create certain weaknesses for rural education, it also means a richer mix in that rural children from different socioeconomic classes attend school together (Dunne, 1977).

In a 1985 study conducted at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University, it was found that larger schools tended to be more disorderly than smaller ones (Gottfredson 1985). This points out other advantages for students attending smaller schools: They are safer and rules are clearer than in larger schools.

Also, students in smaller schools are more likely to participate in one or more school activities. Smaller schools usually have similar extra-curricular activities available as do larger schools, and thus, a larger proportion of students in small schools can fill positions of responsibility. As one researcher put it (Huling, 1980), "In small schools, students are generally less expendable." As a result of their involvement, students often have greater confidence and self-esteem with more opportunities to gain recognition.

Paul Nachtigal (1982) says, "The leadership, character building and socialization skills that come from these extracurricular activities are in fact an integral part of the school program. The role that athletic contests and musical and dramatic presentations serve in linking rural schools and rural communities is extremely important, because unlike the case in cities, such events may be the primary, if not the only, source of public entertainment and public pride. The function of a rural school goes far beyond that of educating children; it is not only a piece of the local social structure, it is often the hub that holds the community together."

Since communication between parents and schools tends to be better, parents are generally more aware of and involved in school activities, thus allowing for greater parental support.

Parents are found to be more pleased with their children's schools, and therefore, more willing to support them through increased taxes as schools get smaller (Jess, 1978).

Perhaps some of the reasons parents favor smaller schools are pinpointed by a study of the Montgomery County, Maryland, schools. In that district, smaller schools were found to have teachers who are more innovative; have "emergent" staffs that take on administrative responsibilities and have a voice in the running of the schools; have a family atmosphere in which children, teachers, and parents can know each other and create a supportive atmosphere; have close community relationships; and have a principal who knows a staff and can make

the best use of it. To these claims, reduced rates of violence and vandalism can be added (NIE 1982).

In smaller schools, expenditures per pupil are lower in virtually all categories of spending except transportation, compared to expenditures per urban pupil (Fratoe, 1978). In a cost comparison study between the largest and smallest districts in the state of Washington, the same was found. Superintendent of Public Instruction Bulletin No. 9-87 Financial Services (February 27, 1987), says:

> Using state-generated fiscal reports and the average state expenditure per pupil as a base, we can demonstrate that small and rural districts are not out of line financially. When all costs of operation are considered for equal numbers of students at both ends of the district size spectrum, small districts spend over half as much as the largest districts in the state! Small districts spend approximately twenty-five MILLION dollars LESS than the three largest districts of the state!

Despite economic concerns, recent research suggests that smaller schools that offer diversity in their curricula may offer the best opportunity to create a school climate conducive to teaching and learning. The challenge of maintaining the benefits of smallness, while at the same time providing diversity and breadth in program offerings, is one that needs more attention (Barker, 1985).

Although the above research findings and comments address the benefits in rural education, school administrators in small, rural schools must also face less desirable factors which are often evident in rural schools. O'Neil and Beckner (1981) cite the following aspects as some negative elements which may exist:

- Financial restrictions/limitations on types of facilities and equipment
- Greater limitations on types and numbers of course offerings
- Greater teacher turnover
- Limitations on professional/support services (i.e., special education, counseling, etc.)

Understanding the Rural Community

Knowing the public and keeping abreast of the community's thinking are major requirements for today's successful rural administrator. One of the most serious challenges facing rural educational leaders is to gain a community consensus on what the expectations are for the schools. Time and again rural administrators have stressed the necessity of understanding their community. Richard Carter,

Superintendent of Carbonado (Washington) School District says: "The successful administrator needs to be a good 'fit' to the community."

The authors of the book, The School and Community Relations, describe the situation this way: "Nothing evokes a quicker reaction from parents and citizens than the adoption of policies and practices that run counter to their established attitudes, beliefs and habits" (Kindred, Bagin, and Gallagher, 1984). This chapter provides ideas for better understanding the community being served.

Five observable differences between urban/suburban regions and their rural counterparts, as identified by University of Vermont Professor Fredrick O. Sargent, explain rural income levels and necessitate a distinctive approach to rural planning (Benson, 1983):

1. People in rural towns govern themselves by direct democracy rather than by representative democracy.
2. Rural towns have multiple public goals in contrast to the dominant economic growth goal of urban centers.
3. Social attitudes are dominated by interdependence rather than by competition.
4. Land is held for cultural reasons in addition to economic reasons.
5. Rural towns have much smaller populations and densities than urban/suburban regions.

In addition to the differences between urban/suburban and rural communities, rural areas in the United States differ greatly from each other as well. "The important factors that differentiate a rural community in one part of the country from a community of similar size and isolation in another part of the country appear to be related to (1) the availability of economic resources; (2) cultural priorities of the local community; (3) commonality of purpose; and (4) political efficacy" (Nachtigal, 1982).

The rural school administrator will find it useful to compile a school-community profile to better understand the community. The School and Community Relations, (Kindred, et al., 1984) states that pertinent data about the community should reveal the following:

- The nature of the power structure and the areas of decision making
- Immediate and long-term problems that need attention
- Gaps that should be filled in order to produce more public understanding of educational policies and programs

- Situations to be avoided due to history of conflict
- An identification of those individuals and groups who are friendly or unfriendly toward public education
- The channels through which public opinion is built in the community
- Changes that are occurring in patterns of community life
- Leadership and leadership influence
- The number and types of organizations and social agencies existing in the community.

The amount of information collected will depend on if you are already in the district, or if you are thinking about taking a position in the district. The following is a sample narrative outline of the type of information to be collected in order to learn more about the community (adapted from NWREL, Community Change Process , 1985).

School - Community Profile

I. Physical Setting of the Community

- A. Location
- B. Natural resources
- C. Characteristics of the region
- D. Distribution of houses and services
- E. Relationship of community to region
  1. Spatial relationships to other similar communities and large urban centers
  2. Shared use of natural resources
  3. Economic relationships
  4. Social relationships

II. Human Resources

- A. Population density, growth, distribution, and population projections
- B. Age and gender patterns
- C. Education levels of major or dominant population groups
- D. Occupation and labor force structure
- E. Levels of income and occupation
- F. Length of stay of the average family in the district/school
- G. Ethnic groups and minority groups

III. Social Organization

A. Economic

1. Means of subsistence
2. Marketing
3. Surplus production
4. Scarcity of production

B. Health

1. Community and family health
2. Available services and facilities, inside and outside community

C. Transportation: internal and external

D. Government organization: local, regional, services provided, official power structure

E. Education

1. Instruction and services inside and near the community
2. Individuals and groups who are friendly or unfriendly toward public education
3. Gaps that should be filled in order to produce more public understanding of educational policies and programs

F. Recreational facilities and services

G. Voluntary associations or family groups

1. Members
2. Services
3. Relationships to the power structure

IV. Culture of the Community

- A. General attitudes toward change
- B. Changes that are occurring in patterns of community life
- C. Formal and informal rules of social behavior
- D. Dominant and minority value patterns and/or sentiments and beliefs
- E. Customs and traditions
- F. Conflict resolution patterns
- G. General attitudes toward local leadership
- H. Situations to be avoided due to history of conflict

V. Power and Leadership Patterns

- A. Members of local power structure
- B. Extent of their influence
- C. Source of that power
- D. Use of that power: overt, covert, frequent, seldom
- E. Opposing power groups and intensity of opposition
- F. Existing power patterns and openness to change
- G. Type of leaders in community: patriarchal (head of key families), religious, educators, merchants, factory leaders, absentee landlords, political leaders, county extension agents and other change agents, opinion leaders, leaders or spokesman of minority groups
- H. Channels through which public opinion is built into the community

VI. Social Psychology of the Community

A. Aspiration and expectation

B. Vested interest as a positive or negative influence

C. Community pride and sense of community

D. Competition between groups as motive to engage in projects

E. Felt needs as expressed by community members, and extent of awareness of community problems

Gathering and Summarizing Profile Information

There are various ways of collecting information on the community; being a sensitive observer of people, events, agencies and the results of their interactions is crucial.

The following are ideas which may be useful in gaining the information needed. Some apply to those who are currently in the school district, and others are applicable for those considering a move to a particular rural community.

Methods to Gain Community Information

- Belong to service clubs.
- Know where to get information. Expected hot spots might be: local cafe, sheriff's office, newspaper, county court house, native groups, migrant office, labor office, others.
- Listen, listen, listen to people (be patient).
- Carry over recurrent topics to people you talk with to confirm importance of issues, concerns, etc.; this is called triangulation. (Use with care--don't start rumors!).
- Your behavior is critical (go slowly and quietly). This may be called "skillful inaction."
- Recount informational activities (debrief yourself); after the day is over, write down your impressions.
- Be flexible in your schedule; follow-up any good leads you get.
- Ask your colleagues about the community. Maybe it is their hometown!
- Buy a local community newspaper or high school paper. See what local issues and concerns there are.

- Become familiar with the community; drive around, walk around.
- Prepare the local group for your visit: phone calls, letters, intermediary endorsements that may help legitimize your visit. Ask what the issues are. Get names of people to visit.
- Why and when are you going? Set an agenda for yourself--how long to stay, what are you planning to do while there?
- Be inquisitive (sometimes naive), especially about local events of which they may be proud.
- Accept invitations carefully. Remember, your purpose is to make wise use of limited time available.

Summarizing Your Information

- Back home, summarize your visit by reviewing all your activities.
- Review your school-community profile to see how much more information you now have. What did you miss?
- Write down any ideas, thoughts and/or recommendations that seem to be especially important for follow-up activities (letters or visits).
- Thank you letters to people who have been especially helpful are often important. Keep them brief and friendly.

The rural administrator should belong to service organizations in the community to develop lines of communication. When people in the community see the administrator as a person, the walls of defense are reduced. One rule that has been stressed is to talk so that you can be understood--avoid professional jargon.

The task of the administrator is both to understand the range of community attitudes and aspirations, and to integrate them into a viable and acceptable program of action congruent to the needs and expectations of the community. The first and major step in developing a school public relations program is collecting information that will enable the school district to know the community.

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Chapter 2

The Board/Administration as a Team and Roles of the Team Members

"The characterisitcs of flexibility, interpersonal skills and vision are important because leaders in rural schools must deal with a wide diversity of issues and activities. They must be able to work effectively with the school board, teachers, parents and students to effectively accomplish their vision of what their school can become."

– Kelly Tonsmeire
Alaska Staff
Development Network

CHAPTER 2

THE BOARD/ADMINISTRATION AS A TEAM AND ROLES OF THE TEAM MEMBERS

What are the underlying issues in rural schools administrative leadership? Who is the leader is one issue.

Darrell Wright, Superintendent
Jefferson County School District 509-J
Madras, Oregon

The relationship the school board enjoys with the administrative staff, and particularly the superintendent, is the foundation of the school system. Much of the operation of the school district is dependent upon the trust and confidence between the school board members and their administrative staff. Local control of the education process is a high priority of the school board. Board and administrator teamwork is essential to this effort and requires continuous work and attention.

Much has been written about board/administration relations. This chapter pulls together some of these ideas, and briefly discusses the foundation of teamwork. Also included are specific suggestions to build the board/administration team, and sample forms to help the processes. These include:

- Superintendent's evaluation by the board
- Superintendent's summary of follow-up on board actions
- Board training ideas and sample schedule of board training
- Ten ways guaranteed to improve your board/superintendent relations
- Roles and expectations

Foundations of Teamwork

In most cases, the primary cause of a breakdown in the relationship between the superintendent and school board is failure to communicate. Good communication, mutual respect, and a clear understanding of each other's role, responsibilities and expectations are key elements in forming the basis for a sound relationship. The basis for good communication is a shared understanding. The superintendent and board need to develop common goals

and expectations. Without clearly defined roles and mutual respect, understanding cannot be accomplished. Problems in communication are cumulative. Neglect of suitable communication jeopardizes the understanding of each other's roles and mutual respect.

Essentially there are several principles or steps involved in developing a teamwork atmosphere:

1. Have a common goal--some call this mission or vision. (See Chapter 7, "Vision Building").

2. Develop the strategies to accomplish that goal or vision.

3. Establish a monitoring procedure to ensure that the strategies are being implemented and evaluated and that an assessment of the progress toward goal attainment takes place.

4. Establish role definitions. Team members must thoroughly understand what is expected of them.

5. Establish trust as the basis for relationships. Team members must be able to trust each other or achievement of the goal will be extremely difficult, if not impossible. This trust can only be achieved through communication and a measure of self-confidence.

Tools for Building Teamwork

NWREL offers many thanks to Gene Sharratt of Chehalis (Washington) School District for contributing several ideas and forms which can be utilized to enhance board/superintendent teamwork. The specific forms are located in the appendix section at the end of this chapter.

1. "Superintendent's Evaluation by The Board" (Appendix 2-A). This form is a tool useful in helping open communication about board expectations and perceptions of the superintendent. The form also may be used as a self-evaluation tool by the superintendent, and may be enlightening when compared to the perceptions of the board. Either method may provide the needed insights for improvement by the superintendent. (Note: Original source for this form is the American Association of School Administrators, 1980.)

2. "Superintendent's Summary of Follow-up on Board Actions" (Appendix 2-B). The board will be asking the superintendent to act upon its suggestions. The form "Superintendent's Summary of Follow-up on Board Actions" may be helpful to the superintendent as a method of follow-up on the requests made by the board. Besides helping the superintendent to be organized, this demonstrates to the board that the superintendent is indeed working on the areas they requested. (Note: Original source for this form is the Washington State School Directors' Association.)

3. "Board Training Ideas." When school boards come together, it is crucial to remember that many members may not have background in all of the areas they and/or the administrator feel are necessary to be good decision makers. The rural school administrator can help by providing the means for them to acquire this knowledge. The first step would be to simply ask board members to give their ideas for areas of training. The list may include:

Parliamentary Procedures
Special Education
Drop-out Prevention
Testing and Assessment
Grading and Reporting
Curriculum Areas
Accreditation
Library Services
State Law
Grievance Procedures
Student Discipline and Rights
Due Process
Goal Setting
Policy Book Review
Open Meeting Procedures
Budget and Finance
Staff Evaluation
Business Office Services
Counseling Services
Health Services and Requirements
Facility Standards
Volunteer Program Efforts
Employee Contracts, Salaries, Benefits and Negotiations
District Financial Investments

The training may be conducted by the school administrator or any other staff member in the school who has expertise in the topic. There may be a preference to bring in a knowledgeable person from outside the district, and the board may have ideas as to where information may be obtained, such as the state school board association.

After the choices have been made for board training topics, develop a work schedule with a timeline. A "Sample Work Schedule for Board Training" (Appendix 2-C) is an example of what a schedule might look like.

Carroll Johnson (1980), in "A Modest Proposal to Improve Board/Superintendent Relationships," suggests a variety of causes when the relationship between the school board and superintendent has gone awry. One cause would be that the board and superintendent may disagree fundamentally on a philosophy of education and district direction--goals and planning. (See Chapter 7, "Vision Building" for assistance in this area.) Johnson goes on to say that the superintendent or the board may be incompetent and/or corrupt. In such cases, good relations are not appropriate. The board should fire an incompetent superintendent, and a superintendent should resign or take other appropriate steps if he/she discovers the board is corrupt. Johnson adds, "If you are a board member dissatisfied with your superintendent and cannot honestly say that he/she is incompetent, corrupt, or in fundamental philosophical opposition, I would urge you to evaluate your own role in the relationship first. I would urge

the same to a superintendent dissatisfied with a board member. It is your job to do so."

The Joint American Association of School Administrators/School Boards Association Committee recommends that, as a policy for improving school board operations, the individual board members and the board as a whole evaluate their own performance once a year. This information can be used by the board to establish objectives for the coming year. Accomplishment of objectives will be a measure of performance. Improvement should take place if the evaluation is done systematically with good planning, follow-through and assessment of results.

Board members may choose to develop standards that measure such areas as their relationship with the superintendent, how well they conduct board meetings, and how the community perceives the schools. A composite picture of board strengths and weaknesses, with documented supportive evidence, will provide the most accurate picture. Suggestions about how to improve should be included. The board then provides itself with inservice education to ensure it meets its own objectives.

Ray Smith of Washington State University has provided a helpful summary of the important components of good board/superintendent relations, published in his "Rural Education Newsletter".

Ten Ways Guaranteed to Improve Board/Superintendent Relations:

1. Hold an annual board evaluation session.
2. Have a planned annual superintendent evaluation process.
3. Spend time on board/superintendent development.
4. Develop and adopt a philosophy of education of your district.
5. Present a "united front." Take problems to their source.
6. Avoid educational sabotage.
7. Establish methods for handling controversy and crisis.
8. Establish partnerships between teachers, administrative support staff and the board as well as parents.
9. Tell the educational story.
10. Stand up for what you believe in.

Education needs strong leaders on their school boards and strong leaders as administrators. Educational success depends, to a large degree, on the good working relationship between the school board and the administrators it employs. This relationship needs continuous attention.

Roles and Expectations

The way in which a person behaves within a position is determined primarily by the role definitions and expectations of appropriate actions for a particular school and school district. Specific role definitions and responsibilities for various positions in the school should be examined in terms of behaviors which will maximize achievement for all students. Included in this chapter is a discussion of ways to view specific roles and expectations associated with each.

Because rural districts typically have a much leaner administrative structure than their urban/suburban counterparts, leadership in the rural setting may include a wider variety of tasks and roles. Thus, a superintendent also may be a principal, teacher, business administrator, personnel director, and transportation coordinator. Terrence Deal and Samuel Nutt (1979) have outlined roles in terms of four zones--especially appropriate for looking at rural situations.

Role Zones

1. Instructional Zone--This would include certificated teachers, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and teaching specialists.

2. Administrative Zone--Superintendents and principals would be members of this zone. Any specialists, coordinators, directors, or special administrators may be included as well.

3. Community--The key constituencies in the local environment would include the board, clubs and associations, occupational affiliations, parents or ad hoc groups of residents.

4. Remote Environment--Important agencies in the environment which are outside the immediate school system are considered remote. Intermediate educational agencies, consortia, accrediting agencies, colleges or universities, regional educational laboratories, or state regulatory agencies would comprise this zone.

The school board has the all-important role of determining policy and governance for the school, and the board is the unit that is ultimately responsible for what happens in the district.

This zone structure offers the rural leader a way to look at and better understand the current system, helping to lay a foundation of trust and confidence between and among the various zones and respective members. When roles are agreed

upon and goals establishing direction are outlined, accountability is well known by all involved, communication is enhanced, expectations are more clearly understood, and an effective school system is a more likely result.

Especially important is an understanding of the differences between the roles of the superintendent and school board; often the roles become fuzzy and overlapping. This can result in conflicts that may even lead to an administrator's dismissal.

What Should a Superintendent Expect of the Local School Board?

A superintendent has a right to expect certain things from the board. The following list represents a clear and concise statement of the board's responsibilities to its superintendent. Conflicts and confusion are less likely to occur if these points are implemented.

The school board should:

- Establish standards and policies, assure that they are being met, and inform the public of these decisions. Provide adequate local resources to meet these standards and to enable the superintendent and other staff to continue their professional development on an annual basis.
- Avoid directly handling any administrative details, delegate to the superintendent the responsibility for all executive functions, and give the authority to fulfill these responsibilities.
- Receive all reports from the employees of the school system through the superintendent and make all the school system employees directly responsible to the superintendent.
- Consult with the superintendent regarding the school system when considering taking action.
- Assist the superintendent in understanding the school system and the community, and give counsel and advice.
- Support the superintendent loyally and actively in decisions and actions which conform to proper professional standards and board policy.
- Hold the superintendent clearly responsible for school administration; require him/her to keep the board fully and accurately informed about the school program in both written and oral reports; review results of the superintendent's work; discuss with the superintendent any methods or procedures which do not meet with the approval of the board; apprise the superintendent of positive results of his/her work.

Every board of education has not only the right but an inescapable and serious duty to evaluate the superintendent's work. After a reasonable length of time on

the job, the board should evaluate the superintendent's work in terms of criteria established when the initial selection was made. These criteria, and others that might have been developed and agreed upon since the appointment, when clearly and fully understood by both the board and the superintendent, provide a good basis for evaluating the chief executive. (See example of superintendent evaluation form included in this chapter.)

What Should the School Board Expect of Its Superintendent?

The evaluation of the superintendent's work should be directly related to outlined duties and responsibilities. Judgments, if they are to be sound, should be made by the whole board on the basis of valid evidence submitted by responsible persons. The evaluation, of course, should be in the public interest and should be made carefully, thoughtfully, deliberately, impartially, and impersonally. After an initial period during which the superintendent becomes familiar with the community, the school system, and requirements of the job, evaluation should be a continuous undertaking. The following are elements within the role of the superintendent, and a list of what a school board should be able to expect from the superintendent.

- Create the vision
- Specify the indicator of effectiveness
- Allocate adequate resources
- Hold administrators accountable for achieving standards
- Provide leadership by example
- Provide training
- Decentralize problem solving
- Serve as its chief executive officer
- Serve as its professional adviser in all matters and recommend appropriate school policies for consideration
- Implement and execute all board-adopted policies
- Keep the board fully and accurately informed about the school program in both written and oral reports
- Interpret the needs of the school system
- Present professional recommendations on all problems and issues considered by the board

- Devote a large share of thought and time to the improvement of instruction
- Be alert to advances and improvements in educational programs
- Lead in the development and operation of an adequate program of school/community relations
- Participate in community activities
- Use care in nominating candidates for appointment to the school staff
- Recommend purchase of equipment, books, and supplies appropriate to purposes and needs of the school system
- Present for consideration an annual budget designed to serve the needs of the school system
- Establish and carry out the financial operations of the district to ensure adherence to budget provisions and wise use of school funds

What Should Be Expected of the Principal and Teacher?

Whether or not the rural school district superintendent additionally performs as school principal and/or teacher, or if these functions are performed by others, both the principal and the teacher need to have clearly defined roles (adapted from NASSP, 1976).

The role of the principal is to:

- Identify needed resources and personnel
- Allocate resources
- Organize time for teacher/staff discussion and decision making plans to reach standards to determine how to most effectively engage the students and how to effectively instruct them
- Develop an effective school climate for the student population served that is conducive to teaching and learning
- Hold teachers and staff accountable for agreed upon goals
- Develop an effective parental involvement/participation plan

The role of the teacher is to:

- Diagnose and remediate student learning needs
- Emphasize mastery of instructional objectives by all students
- Utilize effective instructional strategies suited to the group

- Assist in establishing schoolwide plans to achieve standards
- Assist novice teachers
- Provide peer coaching and model good teaching when serving as a lead or mentor teacher
- Assist in evaluation and coordinate department or grade level instruction when serving as department heads
- Report on student progress to parents
- Supervise students in curricular and extra-curricular environments and activities
- Assist in curriculum development

In the preceding discussion on appropriate role definitions for various members of the leadership team, it is important to remember that the school and district function as a system. There are wide differences among districts on how roles are defined. The common element in effective school district relationships is that clear agreements have been made between board and administration relative to their respective roles. Individual roles intertwine to create the school and district learning climate. Even though each individual has a responsibility to perform his/her own roles effectively, it is a collective responsibility to create the learning climate where all the students achieve well.

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Appendix 2-A

SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION BY THE BOARD

Directions: Circle the response that best reflects the consensus of the board with regard to each of the following items

Superintendent:	Always true	True most of the time	True about half the time	Seldom true	Never true	COMMENTS
1. Prepares carefully for board meetings	5	4	3	2	1	
2. Provides ample information to enable board members to make decisions	5	4	3	2	1	
3. Involves staff members in board meetings	5	4	3	2	1	
4. Is responsive to concerns of the board	5	4	3	2	1	
5. Answers questions of board members promptly	5	4	3	2	1	
6. Handles media relations skillfully	5	4	3	2	1	
7. Follows up promptly on requests of the board	5	4	3	2	1	
8. Keeps board fully informed about school operations	5	4	3	2	1	
9. Delegates responsibilities and authority to subordinates	5	4	3	2	1	
10. Implements fully board policies	5	4	3	2	1	
11. Interprets board policies to staff	5	4	3	2	1	
12. Is effective in management of business and fiscal affairs	5	4	3	2	1	
13. Advises the board on need for new and/or revised policies and procedures	5	4	3	2	1	
14. Is adept in personnel management	5	4	3	2	1	

Appendix 2-A (Continued)

SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION BY THE BOARD

15.	Conducts employee relations skillfully	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Is knowledgeable and up-tp-date in curriculum and instructional trends and developments	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Is effective in short and long-range planning	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Anticipates problems and is effective in preventive actions	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Maintains good relations with local government leaders	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Is effective in working with state legislative leaders	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Maintains effective working relationships with state department of education	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Knows how to pace self	5	4	3	2	1
23.	Keeps self physically fit	5	4	3	2	1
24.	Maintains good mental health	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Engages in activities to promote own professional growth and development	5	4	3	2	1

Reprinted from: *Evaluating the Superintendent*, A Joint Publication of the American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association

Appendix 2-B

Superintendent's Summary of Follow-Up On Board Actions

Board Direction Date	Staff Assigned	Follow Up Action Indicated	Est. Completion Date	Progress

Appendix 2-C

SAMPLE WORK SCHEDULE FOR BOARD TRAINING

September	5:30	Dinner
	6:00-7:15	Work Session Topic: STUDENTS RIGHTS/RESPONSIBILITY
	7:30	Regular Meeting
October	7:30	Regular Meeting Report Topic: LIBRARY SERVICES
November	5:30	Dinner
	6:00-7:15	Work Session Topic: COMMUNITY SURVEY
	7:30	Regular Meeting
December	7:30	Regular Meeting Report Topic: SPECIAL EDUCATION
January	5:30	Dinner
	6:00-7:15	Work Session Topic: FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE/SECURITY
	7:30	Regular Meeting
February	7:30	Regular Meeting Report Topic: COUNSELING SERVICES
March	5:30	Dinner
	6:00-7:15	Work Session Topic: DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAM
	7:30	Regular Meeting
April	7:30	Regular Meeting Report Topic: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
May	5:30	Dinner
	6:00-7:15	Work Session Topic: COMPUTER EDUCATION
	7:30	Regular Meeting
June	7:30	Regular Meeting Report Topic: DROP OUT PREVENTION

Chapter 3

Leadership and Management

"Leadership is interpersonal, and leaders cannot be seen in isolation from followers. The linkage between the two embraces the dynamics of wants and needs and other motivations."

– James MacGregor Burns
Political scientist

CHAPTER 3

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

What is most significant to developing leadership are the qualities which correspond to the most positive attributes of the new social character: a caring, respectful, and responsible attitude; flexibility about people and organizational structure; and a participative approach to management, the willingness to share power. Furthermore, they are self-aware, conscious of their weaknesses as well as strengths, concerned with self-development for themselves as well as others.

Michael Maccoby, 1981

There has been increasing recognition of the vital leadership role of the educational administrator in shaping schools and school districts which consistently achieve above expectations. Research has identified elements that appear in effective schools. One of the first items to be listed is the leadership of the administrator. In fact, it is difficult to pick up an educational journal without finding something mentioned about this element. Even though there is a wealth of information, some of it may make little sense. The purpose of this chapter is to provide information that may be more applicable. The topics included are:

- Characteristics of an effective educational leader
- Qualities of a leader versus qualities of a manager
- A survey which may be useful in determining placement on a manager/leader continuum
- The importance of organizational development for the educational administrator
- How to determine the health of the school organization

What Does the Effective School Administrator Do?

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (Duke, 1982) research in instructional leadership has distinguished certain characteristics that effective school administrators display. As a point of reference, the school administrator can ask these questions. Do I:

- Place the achievement and happiness of students first in my priorities?

- View myself as an instructional leader?
- Articulate high expectations for teachers, students and myself?
- Aggressively seek out and develop parent support?
- Get actively involved in decisions about which teachers teach which students?
- Ensure that teachers establish clear student objectives to serve as a focus of instruction?
- Involve myself in classroom discipline policy?
- Ensure the involvement of influential staff members in innovative school projects?
- Develop strategies for staff participation and seek advice on important issues from staff?
- Hold regular and frequent staff meetings?
- Attend all, or at least the early, inservice sessions provided for teachers?
- Monitor student progress very closely and investigate slower-than-expected rates of progress with teachers?
- Collect information about classroom instruction and use it to help teachers improve instruction?
- Facilitate within-school communication?

Once these questions have been answered with an open mind, approach changes with a healthy skepticism of those self-appointed experts who offer easy and absolute answers. Discern between what will be helpful in improving the school and what will just take time and energy.

The aforementioned are what research has shown to be discriminating characteristics of an effective administrator. But what are the underlying leadership qualities themselves? Are they different from characteristics of good management? Are these characteristics mutually exclusive?

Leaders and Managers

Hersey and Blanchard (1977) point out that leadership is broader than management. Essentially, management concerns focus on accomplishing goals, and managers tend to be task oriented. Leadership issues focus on influencing behaviors, and leaders tend to be people oriented.

Differences between leaders and managers are summarized in Table 1 (adapted from Human Synergistics, 1984 and Burke, 1986).

TABLE 1: Differences Between Leaders and Managers

LEADERS	MANAGERS
Set and shape the organization's goals	Suggest, react to, and implement objectives
Focus on ideas/vision	Focus on tasks/positions
Devise new approaches and alternatives	Act to limit departure from objectives to ensure work continues
Provide inspiration	Promote involvement
Find problems	Fix problems
Think in long range	Get things done now
Are intuitive, empathic, turbulent change agents	Work to maintain status quo according to formal, steady, reliable roles

Leadership qualities and management qualities complement and supplement each other. A rural educational administrator must have the ability to manage the budget, transportation, etc. However, for arousing energy in the school staff, the traits of a leader are needed--being charismatic, inspirational, and flexible. Leaders must have the skills to inspire followers to accept change, to take initiative and risks. For indispensable help in reaching the goals, though, schools need both leadership and managerial behaviors; they require both vision and techniques to bring that vision into reality. Without vision, schools are condemned simply to repeat the current patterns of actions, while without management the vision will never become reality.

James MacGregor Burns (1978, p.4) in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *LEADERSHIP*, states that a leader "recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower." Leaders, according to Burns, are visionary, solitary, inspirational figures consumed with certain ideals and goals; they engender intense emotions in their followers. In a word, they are charismatic. They know what their followers' needs are, even when the followers themselves are not aware of their needs. It may be that leaders have stronger empathy skills than the average person. They may be much more accurate in their perceptions of others. Leaders accurately assess and provide a mission and goals that, when achieved, respond to the followers' needs. Thus, leaders are primarily

concerned with change. They usually are able to communicate a clear vision of some future condition--one that somehow speaks to the needs of most followers--but are often less clear and concerned with how to achieve their objective. Burns contends that managers have a penchant for teamwork, task accomplishment, and problem solving with a steadier, less turbulent manner of work with others. As previously mentioned, both leadership traits and management traits are needed. This balance of behaviors in persons holding leadership positions in rural schools will depend on the nature of that school and school district, the community, its board, and its history.

Gordon Cawelti (1982), Executive Director of The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has identified four technical tasks or management processes that must be utilized by the school administrator to improve instruction. These aspects of instructional leadership are:

- Curriculum development
- Supervision of teaching
- Staff development for improved teaching
- Teacher evaluation

Cawelti (1982) also has determined a desired pattern of leadership behaviors among educational leaders. These behaviors are based on research on corporate and school leaders whose organizations consistently achieve good results. These leadership behaviors include sense of vision, instructional support, monitoring learning, and organization development. The following list of behaviors and skills needed to develop them encompasses a blend of the previously discussed leadership and management characteristics.

Leadership Behaviors and Skills

1. *SENSE OF VISION*: Reaching consensus on school goals or areas of emphasis is critical in articulating a vision of what might be. "What is our business--and what should it be?" (See Chapter 7, "Vision Building" for additional ideas.) The following are skills needed to develop vision:

    - Skill in the group process of consensus building
    - Ability to scan large amounts of information and interpret its significance for the school
    - Seeking creative solutions for educational needs of students

- Clearly articulating views to parents, faculty, and community groups

2. *INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT*: Most rural administrators do not have personnel who are available for assisting their teachers in improving instruction. This means that it is done through collaborative efforts with the staff by an outside source, or not done at all. However, management of instruction is crucial to school improvement and must be attended to. Skills needed to provide instructional support are:

    - Ability to demonstrate the fundamentals of teaching
    - Providing reliable feedback to teachers on their teaching
    - Knowledge of the elements of effective staff development
    - Functioning in a supervisory role which helps teachers to expand their repertoire of strategies within various subjects

3. *MONITORING LEARNING*: The monitoring function is very closely analogous to the classic management function of "control" which means, very simply, regularly retrieving data on how well the school or school district is attaining its goals. Administrators who take the monitoring function seriously spend more time designing evaluation programs appropriate to the curriculum, and they engage their faculties in using evaluative data to plan for school improvement. Skills needed to develop monitoring behavior are:

    - Establishing clear indicators profiling a balanced array of student performance
    - Providing periodic reports to parents and faculty of progress made in attaining these goals of the school
    - Utilizing such data with the faculty in selecting interventions or strategies to improve weaknesses
    - Assuring that teacher-made evaluation devices measure significant outcomes such as comprehension, application, creativity, or critical thinking
    - Making appropriate use of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests
    - Assuring congruity between goals, instructional materials, and examinations

4. *ORGANIZATION DEVELOPER*: If there is a single message coming through again and again from the several studies in the corporate world, it is that people perform better when made to feel that their work is significant and valued. An organizational developer utilizes practices of the Japanese management philosophy identified as "Theory Z" (Ouchi as cited by Pheasant, 1985). Organizations that employ a "Theory Z" management style are committed to the people within the organization as well as the organization itself. In the school organization, the commitment extends to students, staff, the school board, and community members. Skills needed to excel as an organization developer are:

    - Ability to engage in team-building activities
    - Expertise in conflict resolution
    - Ability to diagnose and correct organization pathology such as low morale or communication problems
    - Prowess in shared decision making and managing effective meetings
    - Skill in facilitating community involvement

Organizational Health of the Schools

Determination of the school's health is not done in a vacuum solely by the school administrator. Open communication with staff is essential. We are offering two tools that can serve as a starting point for discussions between staff and the school administrator relative to his/her role as a rural educational leader and manager. A survey, drafted by ASCD (1982) to determine organizational health, may be used with staff to find areas that need attention. This Survey of Organizational Health is provided in Appendix 3-A. A Leadership Behavior Activity, provided in Appendix 3-B, may be used to gain insights from staff relative to the elements of leadership behavior.

The "leader" in the administrator must spark enthusiasm by setting the direction and the "manager" in the administrator must see that there is sound follow-through. The need for planned school improvement and instructional leadership/management is so great that there really is no longer an option.

The American Association of School Administrators (1983) states: "There is a 'bottom line' for our schools. That bottom line must be assuring that knowledge and skills are effectively taught and learned, that talents are enhanced, and that, ultimately, students are prepared to live challenging and productive lives. What is taught and how it is taught make a profound difference for today's students who will be leaders of our communities, our states or provinces, and our nation

tomorrow. Effective instructional management is basic to educational excellence. It is a bread and butter issue. Nothing should be more basic for the true educational leader. Yet, the management of instruction in our schools has sometimes faltered. When that situation takes place, students lack needed preparation for life...and schools lose support. We can't allow that to happen."

As stated at the beginning, it is not always clear when one is a leader and when one is a manager. An effective rural administrator must be both. To summarize the main thesis of this chapter as succinctly as possible, leaders empower their staffs via direction and inspiration, and managers via action and participation. Both are essential to effective instructional management in the rural school setting.

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APPENDIX 3-A

SURVEY OF ORGANIZATION HEALTH

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Goal Focus: the goals of this school are clear to me.....	SA	A	U	D	SD
2.	Goal Acceptance: I believe the goals of this school are important ones. (reply only if you agree with item one)	SA	A	U	D	SD
3.	Orientation Reputations: This school is recognized and respected for its excellence.....	SA	A	U	D	SD
4.	Morale: My morale as a member of this school system is good.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5.	Job Satisfaction: I get personal satisfaction from and take pride in my position as a member of this staff	SA	A	U	D	SD
6.	Division of Responsibilities: There is a clearly defined and reasonable division of responsibilities among the staff (or departments).	SA	A	U	D	SD
7.	Work Overload: There is an equitable distribution of personnel resources among departments with no one employee overloaded or frequently idle.....	SA	A	U	D	SD
8.	Power Equalization: There is an equitable distribution of influence among staff members of equal levels.	SA	A	U	D	SD
9.	Leadership: I believe that my supervisor expects me to suggest changes to improve effectiveness, rather than just waiting for problems to be acted upon by the supervisor.....	SA	A	U	D	SD
10.	Accessibility to Superior: My immediate supervisor is generally available whenever I need to see him/her.	SA	A	U	D	SD

APPENDIX 3-A (Continued)

SURVEY OF ORGANIZATION HEALTH

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11.	Communication Adequacy: I feel free to discuss with my superior any operational problem affecting me (my department), and to express a differing viewpoint without fear of recrimination.	SA	A	U	D	SD
12.	Information Flow: I am kept adequately informed of those decisions, policies and developments which affect the operation of my program (department).	SA	A	U	D	SD
13.	Problem-Solving Adequacy: the problem-solving mechanisms of this school/school district serve to respond promptly and effectively to the needs of the school/school district.	SA	A	U	D	SD
14.	Staff Meetings: The frequency and format of the staff meetings make them productive.....	SA	A	U	D	SD
15.	Coordination: the planning efforts among the various departments are well coordinated and serve to facilitate efficient services to memberships.	SA	A	U	D	SD
16.	If you could do one thing to improve working conditions at this school, what would it be?	SA	A	U	D	SD

Appendix 3-B

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR ACTIVITY

Ask the staff to answer the following questions. This could be done on an individual basis and shared in a group meeting, or the questions may be divided among groups.

1. *STUDENT OUTCOMES.* What do you really want for your students? What outcomes? What exit behaviors? What characteristics? What skills? What knowledge? In other words, what do you want your students to leave school with after they complete grade 12?

2. *PHILOSOPHICAL BASE.* List at least 10 "we believe" statements that constitute a vital part of your philosophy of learning, teaching, and school operation. Think about the degree to which these beliefs are supported by the research literature.

3. *PSYCHOLOGICAL BASE.* List at least 10 "we believe" statements regarding your theory of human behavior and development. You may, for example, deal with the conditions needed for human growth, learning, and development. What conditions are needed for good relationships? What is needed for good self esteem? How can motivation be enhanced?

4. *LEADERSHIP.* List at least five "we believe" statements regarding what constitutes effective leadership. Identify at least five aspects of leadership and/or leadership strategies that should be used in schools to help all people--students, teachers, administrators--to feel that they belong to an organization that helps them to be productive and happy in their work.

5. *COMMUNICATIONS.* What are your ideas about how to provide for and ensure the free, effective, and efficient flow of information and ideas throughout a school? An entire district? List at least 7 to 10 ideas, guidelines, or strategies that would improve communication among teachers/administrators in the school.

6. *STAFF DEVELOPMENT.* What constitutes an effective staff development model? List at least 7 to 10 ideas, guidelines, or strategies for an effective staff development model.

7. *CHANGE PROCESS.* List at least 7 to 10 ideas, guidelines, or strategies regarding how people and organizations change. What is needed for change? How do people change? How do organizations change? Therefore, how must change be approached? What would be a good change process? What must be considered in a good change process?

8. *CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT.* List your ideas regarding these questions: What is a good climate? What are the elements or factors that make up a climate? How can one go about creating, monitoring, and improving the climate?

Appendix 3-B (Continued)

9. *INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS.* What would you see in a highly effective instructional process? What would you see teachers doing? What would you see students doing?

10. *CLASSROOM PRACTICES.* List at least 10 key classroom practices in which all teachers engage. For each practice, identify one or two regulations you would prescribe for the effective conduct of that practice?

11. *TEACHER TEAMING.* How do you think teachers can be teamed in a school for the most effective planning, collaboration, teaching, communication, renewal, and development? How can teachers be teamed to best accommodate how students really learn and progress?

12. *STUDENT GROUPING.* How do you think students should be grouped in school in order to enhance their emotional, social, intellectual, and academic development.

13. *STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AND DISCIPLINE.* What do you think is needed to improve student responsibility and behavior? What are some ideas, guidelines, or strategies you would use in order to promote student responsibility and good discipline? What should be the goal of an approach to discipline?

14. *BOARD OF EDUCATION.* What are your ideas, guidelines, or strategies regarding how a school board can best support and promote a highly effective school program? What can we do to help them in their efforts?

Chapter 4

Problem Solving and Decision Making

"The dimension which underlies the range of decision style is the degree to which the leader allows the followers to participate in the process of decision making."

– Martin M. Chemers
University of Utah

CHAPTER 4

PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING

Few things can 'make or break' school administrators more than their ability to arrive at decisions and solve problems. Good schools have leaders who establish processes of decision making and problem solving that are respectful to staff and move the organization forward. Ineffective schools are characterized by vacillation, procrastination, and avoidance of problems as a dominant leadership style.

Human Synergistics, Inc., 1984, p.20

In rural settings the educational leader is often isolated from other educational administrators. Many experienced rural administrators have indicated that to be successful in this role it is imperative to have the problem solving skills necessary to make well reasoned decisions on their own. There is not the cadre of administrators that their urban counterparts may use as a sounding board. "To think of an administrative support system is a bit of a misnomer" (Nachtigal, p.7, 1987). It is hoped that the following process will provide the steps needed for problem solving. Bear in mind that this process is such that the rural administrator can proceed alone or with the help of others. Also, remember that good problem solving involves a fair amount of intuition as well as linear, deductive thinking. "Gut feelings" can be really important in making decisions.

A problem may be defined as a need that may either be a negative situation to be eliminated or avoided, or a positive advantage to be gained. Some may use the term "opportunities" to describe either situation since there exists an opportunity to change a situation for the better. Problem solving, then, is creating change to bring actual conditions closer to conditions that are desired. While leadership is responsible for anticipating and taking steps to avoid the occurrence of problems, responding to unforeseen problems as they arise is a crucial process as well.

The fundamental process of problem solving is basically the same regardless of the problem. This chapter provides a step-by-step procedure of problem solving and decision making. These steps are:

- analyzing the problem
- developing the goals
- brainstorming the solution

- making the decision
- taking action
- implementing the plan and monitoring the results.

A. Analyzing the Problem

In analyzing the problem, attempt to arrive at a full understanding of its nature, extent, and seriousness. In analyzing the problem one should:

1. Study concrete examples of it. Ask the question "What is happening that needs to be changed?" This is looking at the results of the problem, the actual manifestations of the problem. Is there a discrepancy between the actual and the ideal? One must, therefore, be able to describe what the ideal state would be. In deciding if there is a discrepancy between the actual and the ideal situation, one must have a conceptual understanding of what the desired situation would be.

2. Gather numerical data or instances in brief example form to determine the extent of the problem. Ask: "Who is involved, when and where does it happen, how often, and to what degree does it occur, and why?"

3. Reason whether or not it may become worse in the future. What will occur if nothing changes? What are the general trends in the school? Is conflict or concern intensifying?

4. Question if any significant change can be implemented. Some needs go away by themselves without external action.

5. Determine if the situation deserves your attention now as compared to other priorities. The criteria for a higher priority would include the intensity or affect it has on people, the number of people affected, the seriousness of the impact of making a wrong choice and the cost.

6. Raise the question, "Who owns the problem?", since the person who owns the problem is the person who can do something about it. Ask the questions, "How does this affect you?" and "What do you think we can do about it?" (Olson, 1986). The person who can answer these questions is the one to solve the problem. However, the person must be ready to confront the problem which means that the person must recognize and become concerned about the problem.

7. Determine the causes of the problem. In order to come to a resolution, one must first understand the origin of the problem: "What factors have brought this situation about and are still operating to keep the problem in existence?" It is important to beware of superficial analysis of causes. The real question is, "What are the causal factors that account for the situation?" Always ask, "What is wrong with what we are doing now?" Part of the causal factors may be that the current policies and programs were not designed to deal with the issues that are causing the problem.

Recognizing a problem exists must be viewed as an opportunity to move the situation (school) from the present state to the desired state. The most powerful action in problem solving is becoming more aware of the problem because accepting the full implication of the problem begins to solve it. The problem should now be summarized in one clear, comprehensive, and concise statement.

B. Developing the Goal

The problem is now ready to be defined as a goal. The goal should be expressed in measurable terms. "What are the results to be achieved?" This should be written in the form of behavioral and observable outcomes. Southeastern Educational Improvement Laboratory (1987) cites Dr. John Reynold's suggestion that in order to determine the specific goals (the desired conditions), the following should be defined or answered:

1. Results--the outcomes expected:
    - What specifically is to result?
    - Who will be involved?
    - When will the result be achieved?
    - Where will the result be achieved?
2. Criteria--measures for acceptability:
    - What are the quantitative standards that indicate the minimum level of goal achievement?
    - What are the qualitative standards that indicate the minimum level of goal achievement?
3. Conditions--Other parameters of the efforts:
    - What limitations or restrictions in terms of time and/or money are to be imposed?
    - What resources in terms of people and/or equipment are required?

The goal should be summarized in a clear, comprehensive, and concise statement just as with the problem statement at the conclusion of the section "Analyzing the Problem." It is crucial that an outcome rather than a strategy be described. The focus is still talking about the ends, not the means, at this point.

C. Brainstorming Solutions

Brainstorm methods are means for accomplishing the goal. Brainstorming may be done alone or as a group process. The goal is to discover all possible solutions. In this phase, do not evaluate the solutions, but work toward discovering as many solutions as possible. This can be done by tapping into various sources of information such as books and journals, school records, and knowledgeable informants. Other good sources include teachers, students or parents, people in other agencies or institutions, and others who have faced a similar problem. Inquire how they solved the problem and ask them for ideas and/or suggestions.

Brainstorming should include inventing new solutions, combining solutions, or grouping solutions into broad classes. Include the status quo in the list of solutions because the current policy or plan being followed may be identified as the best of all possible solutions. A useful technique in generating new ideas is for the administrator to imagine him/herself as someone in another position, i.e., an administrator from another school. Sometimes by taking a step back and looking through the eyes of another person, emotional detachment is minimized and this allows new solutions to appear more freely.

Specify the goals or purposes of selected actions---the end results being sought. The problem-solver should set up criteria or standards.

1. The first criteria has to do with solving the problem. Ask, "What are the minimum acceptable results?" To conceptualize clear, observable end results, the rural school leader should project into the future to determine what it is that is wanted after a specified period of time. This is the ideal vision.

2. Make sure that further problems will not result from adopting a plan. Acting to solve a problem in one area may create problems in other areas, and these should be anticipated.

D. Making the Decision

The last step in problem solving is to decide on the best solution--the one which has the most significant advantages and least significant disadvantages. In any kind of decision, it is important to understand that usually there is not enough time to explore all alternative solutions--nor will all of the decisions satisfy everyone.

Many times making some sort of decision is a crucial task of a leader. Decisions of the school leader should reflect his/her philosophy and permit the schools and the people in them to meet their objectives. That is why the development of a

common vision as discussed in Chapter 7, "Vision Building," is so important. The primary purpose(s) as outlined in the school district's philosophical statement should be considered in the process of making a decision.

If the solution is too complex, people would rather live with the problem. Most administrative decisions are complex. One decision very often leads to other decisions which may need to be approached differently. The success of each decision usually depends upon the wisdom of each decision. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate the results of the decision based upon the intended goal. The sigh of relief over the finality of a decision is not the typical result of the decision making process. By and large, administrative decisions should specify objectives and probable timelines, but to the extent possible, there should be freedom for other professionals within the schools to determine means.

One decision making strategy that may be done as a team or alone is to systematically compare and contrast the solutions. The first portion of the process includes determining the advantages and disadvantages of each solution from Step C (Brainstorming Solutions). Each of the options that has been generated should be subjected to an open-minded evaluation in terms of its advantages and disadvantages, the extent it will solve the problem, the extent to which it is likely to bring about a new significant problem, how well it accomplishes the goal, and the costs. To accomplish this:

1. Write a reasonably complete description of each solution combining those that are similar. Use a separate sheet of paper for each solution.

2. List the advantages on one-half of the page and the disadvantages on the other. Think in terms of long- and short-range consequences.

3. With each solution, judge to what extent it will solve the problem. It may be helpful to use a Likert scale of 1-10, with 10 solving the problem the best.

4. Judge to what extent it is likely to bring about new significant problems, with a 10 not bringing any new problems.

5. Determine the costs in terms of monetary and human resources, with 10 being inexpensive.

After evaluating each solution individually, compare and contrast the solutions. Number the solutions, and then start out by comparing No. 1 to No. 2; after deciding which is the best, compare that one to No. 3, and so on. Continue this process until the one or the combination remaining are judged to be the most satisfactory. The solution which promises to solve the problem most completely will not always be the one selected, for such a solution may have one or more disadvantages of great significance.

Give the solution selected a final careful check to make sure that it has not been misjudged. If possible, run a pilot study to pretest it before putting it into action.

E. Taking Action

Putting a solution into operation calls for careful study of what has to be done, when, and by whom. Sometimes it calls for persuasion in order to get the solution accepted. It may call for people with special competencies and supervisory skills. Successful problem solving does not stop with the decision as to what plan to adopt, but carries over into an action phase.

1. Ownership and commitment must be built into the problem solving process from the beginning. If the active participants, particularly the leaders, are not committed to a resolution method, then the probability of success is limited. Action may not be taken.

   Therefore the first step in planning the implementation of the decision is to gain acceptance and commitment from those who are the most affected. Again, it is desirable that these people are involved in the problem solving process from the beginning.

   If the decision was developed by the administrator alone, a testing of the decision on others for their reaction might be a reasonable step. A second process for acceptance might be to develop a coordination of effort involving those people directly involved. Another possibility would be to delegate the implementation to a person or persons more closely associated to the problem.

2. Reynolds, as cited by Southeastern Educational Improvement Laboratory (1987), suggests that the next step is to identify the activities necessary to implement the strategy. This should include the activities directly related to the strategy as well as a contingency to prevent potential problems. He suggests the following to complete this step:

   a. Itemize all the tasks necessary to carry out the selected solution.

   b. Place these in chronological order.

   c. Develop a plan that delineates the following:

      1) Tasks--What needs to be done?

      2) Primary responsibilities--Who is going to carry out the tasks?

      3) Timeline--When are the tasks going to be accomplished?

F. Implementing the Plan

Sometimes tasks seem overwhelming. By simply going ahead, the inertia of inactivity is overcome. If errors are made while the plan is being carried out, forget about the lost time and remain focused on the goal.

G. Monitoring the Results

The last step is to monitor the results. In other words, evaluate the results and revise as needed. The evaluation procedure should be relatively simple especially if the goal is stated in specific behavioral terms and these expectations are met through implementation. However, it is still crucial to the success of this implementation to develop a strategy to monitor and receive feedback on the progress toward accomplishing the goal. Be aware of the consequences of any action. If the plan is not progressing, either revise it or return to major Step A, Analyzing the Problem.

Identifying the nature of the problem and using a collaborative approach can release energy and establish commitment to the solution. The use of a systematic problem solving process can make problems a source of organizational growth.

Tom Olson (1986) has developed an analysis framework for working with a problem. This is a summary of questions that may be used in defining the need and exploring options for a solution. These are provided in Appendix 4-A (Clarifying the Need Analysis Framework) and Appendix 4-B (Exploring Optional Solutions Analysis Framework). Using these tools will facilitate problem solving for those in rural school administration.

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Appendix 4-A

CLARIFYING THE NEED* ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

NATURE OF NEED	CAUSES	PERVASIVENESS	STATUS OF THE NEED
Analysis	Analysis	Analysis	Analysis
a) Is it problematic or opportunistic?	a) What is the history of the need?	a) About how many people are directly affected?	Check for Understanding Paraphrase the current and projected status of the need
b) Who "owns" it?	b) How have people come to recognize the need?	b) What organizational units are directly affected?	
c) Is it personal or organizational?	c) Why is the school district attending to the need now?		
d) What kind of "hard" data is available?		c) What's the "intensity" of impact?	
e) Is the need growing, stable or diminishing?		d) Consequences of making the wrong decision.	
f) What happens if we ignore it?		Check for Understanding Paraphrase the pervasiveness of the need	
Check for Understanding Paraphrase the statement of the need			

* Adapted from Steven R. Nelson, Clarifying and Defining the Needs of Schools: A Process Approach for School Improvement Organizations. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1986.

Appendix 4-B
EXPLORING OPTIONAL SOLUTIONS
ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Helpful Information

Analysis:

a) Key data and "facts" about the need.

b) Can you handle it yourself? Or do you need another expert's help?

Conclusion:

Olson - NWREL, 1986

Identifying the "Ideal State"

Analysis:

a) What would things look like if the need is satisfied?

b) How realistic is the ideal state?

c) What will it take in terms of resources to achieve the ideal state?

Conclusion:

Optional Solutions

Analysis:

a) What might be the key "pressure points" strategies (policy changes? curriculum change? management procedures change?)

b) What are the key criteria for successful solution?

c) For each "pressure point" strategy, what are the major necessary steps to go through?

Conclusion:

"If someone is shooting at you, you have three choices: You can stand and shoot back — this usually leads to warfare and mutual destruction; you can run away or try to dodge the bullets — this often results in humiliation and a loss of self-esteem; or you can stand put and skillfully disarm your opponent... When you take the wind out of the other person's sails, you end up the winner and your opponent more often than not will also feel like a winner."

– David Burns, M.D.
Psychotherapist

Chapter 5

Conflict Resolution

CHAPTER 5

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Managing conflict is a large part of a school administrator's job. In fact, studies in government and business indicate that from one-quarter to one-half of a manager's work time is spent dealing with conflict.

Human Synergistics, 1984

When asked the question "What type of individual is successful as a rural administrator?", one rural Oregon superintendent stated, "Humility is admirable in small school leaders because they will frequently meet their critics face-to-face." This personal, face-to-face interaction with people in rural settings can be an endearing feature of being a rural leader. When it comes to encountering critics face-to-face, however, rural leaders need special tact and skill.

Some school administrators try to avoid conflicts, and if a conflict occurs they try to hide the issue. Since conflicts are a natural by-product of human interaction, it is important to discuss the most efficient method of handling them. This chapter includes:

- A step-by-step process to successfully resolve conflicts among groups and with individuals
- Identification of appropriate strategies for differing conflict situations

In general, conflicts may be resolved most successfully by using a systematic approach (Deal and Nutt, 1979); (Wayson, 1987):

Steps in Resolving Conflict

1. Get the facts. What is the conflict about? Is it a conflict over factual and tangible issues or is it a matter involving values?
2. Have conflicting parties or groups explain their understanding of the issues and express how the situation has impacted them.
3. Have everyone involved listen to each other as each person restates the points made by "the other side" to show understanding.
4. Use problem solving procedures to devise the plan.

Group Conflict Resolution

Dr. William Wayson (1987) of Ohio State University suggests these procedures for accomplishing the aforementioned steps when handling conflict within a group of people:

1. Divide the disputing people into two groups with similar views (of potential solution to the problem), and have them sit at opposite ends of a room or preferably in separate rooms.

2. Have both groups brainstorm what makes the other group different from them. They are to record this information on paper that is displayed on the wall.

3. Have both groups look at each other's list.

4. Form two new groups by equally dividing each of the groups (from step 1). Half of each new group will represent differing views. Have the groups discuss the lists that were created in their first group.

5. Reconvene all groups and ask them to report what they have learned from the activity.

6. Use problem solving procedures to develop the plan.

    - define the problem in terms of needs rather than solutions,
    - brainstorm alternatives,
    - test the alternatives by examining their consequences,
    - select a solution or a combination of approaches,
    - implement a plan,
    - evaluate the conflict resolution process and monitor progress toward a solution.

(See Chapter 4 for thorough discussion of problem solving.)

If the conflict has developed from assumptions about the motives behind the actions of the opposing individuals, then the following strategy may be helpful.

1. Have the two groups of conflicting people work separately to develop a list with two sections:

    a. What does the other person or group do that irritates, offends or challenges me (us)?

b. Why I (we) believe they do it. What are their motives? This can also be done with the effects on the organization or on my (our) feelings.

2. Have groups exchange places so their lists can be reviewed by each other. They should attempt to guess at why the other group might have arrived at its assumptions about motives.

   a. If the group is large (over 8), break into mixed groups to discuss the issues raised and clarify the assumptions about the motives. Then bring the whole group together to discuss the new information it has received from this activity.

   b. If the group is small, the whole group can discuss the issues raised and clarify the assumptions about the motives.

   c. If the group is volatile, use pairs or very small groups to discuss the issues.

Daniel Feldman (1985) has divided methods of conflict resolution into four goal categories which vary according to how openly they address the conflict.

Methods of Resolving Conflicts

1. Conflict-Evasion is used when attempting to keep the conflict from coming into the open.

   Ignoring the conflict is represented by the absence of action. When used to avoid searching for the causes of the conflict, the situation usually continues to worsen.

   Imposing a solution consists of forcing the conflicting parties to accept a solution devised by a higher-level manager. Any peace that it does achieve is likely to be short-lived. Since the underlying issues are not addressed, the conflict reappears in other guises and in other situations.

2. Conflict-Defusion Strategies are used to keep the conflict in abeyance and to "cool" the emotions of the parties involved.

   "Smoothing" is used by a manager who tries to "smooth it over" by playing down the issues' extent or importance. Like forcing a solution, smoothing generally is ineffective because it does not address the underlying points of conflict.

Appealing to superordinate goals is a method managers use to diffuse conflict by focusing attention on the higher goals that the groups share or the long-range aims that they have in common. This tends to make the current problem seem insignificant when compared to the more important mutual goals (Sherif, 1958).

3. Conflict-Containment Strategies allow some conflict to surface, but tightly control which issues are discussed and the manner in which they are discussed.

   Use representatives of the opposing groups rather than dealing with the groups in their entirety. Research on the use of representatives as a means of showing intergroup conflict is fairly negative in its success rate (Blake and Mouton, 1961).

   Structuring the interaction between groups can be an effective method in resolving conflict if there are constraints on how many issues are discussed and the manner in which they are discussed. Some of the most effective structured interactions to deal with group conflict are:

   - using third-party mediators
   - decreasing the amount of time between problem solving meetings
   - decreasing the formality of the presentation of issues
   - limiting the recitation of historic events and precedents and focusing instead on current issues and goals
   - limiting the amount of time the groups directly interact in the early stages of the conflict-resolution process

   Bargaining results in a mutually satisfactory agreement. Each side usually asks for more than they really expect to get with the idea that concessions will be made.

4. Conflict Confrontation Strategies are designed to try to find a mutually satisfactory solution and uncover all of the issues of the conflict.

Problem solving attempts to identify mutually satisfactory solutions by having both parties work together in defining the problem and exchanging task-related problems. See discussion on problem solving in Chapter 4.

Organizational redesign is effective when the source of conflict stems from the coordination of tasks between different departments.

Two criteria in deciding which strategy to use are 1) how quickly the conflict needs to be resolved and 2) how important the conflict is to the work that needs to be done.

Appendix 5-C provides a chart, Summary of Conflict-Resolution Strategies, which will assist in identification of conflict-resolution strategies, the goal of each strategy, and the situations that are appropriate for each. This was adapted from Feldman (1985).

Individual Conflict Resolution

When the rural school administrator faces a personal misunderstanding with an individual, the conflict can often be attributed to a breakdown in communication. Dr. David Burns (1981) has suggested a three-part strategy for handling conflict in a personal manner on an individual basis. These parts include empathy, disarming, and feedback/negotiation.

1. EMPATHY

Empathy is designed to be investigative: Does the criticism contain a grain of truth? Just what did you do that was objectionable? Did you, in fact, goof up? The specific steps include:

- Ask the person a series of specific questions designed to find out exactly what he or she means.
- Try to avoid being judgmental or defensive as you ask the questions.
- Constantly ask for more and more specific information.
- Attempt to see the world through the critic's eyes.
- If the person attacks you with vague, insulting labels, ask him or her to be more specific and to point out exactly what it is about you or what you did that the person dislikes.

The initial maneuver can itself go a long way to getting the critic off your back, and will help transform an attack into collaboration and mutual respect. By asking the other person specific questions, the possibility of complete rejection by the critic will be minimized. Both parties to the conflict will become aware of specific problems that can be addressed. Listening and understanding the situation as the other person sees it gives the other person an opportunity to express his/her feelings. This tends to defuse any anger and hostility and introduces a problem solving orientation in the place of blaming or debating.

Burns (1981) stresses that even if the criticism seems to be totally unjust, respond with empathy by asking specific questions. Find out exactly what the critic means. If the person is very upset, she or he may be throwing labels, or perhaps even obscenities. Regardless, ask for more information.

- What do those words mean?
- Why does the individual call you a "no good...?"
- How did you offend this person?
- What did you do?
- When did you do it?
- How often have you done it?
- What else does the person dislike about you.

Try to see the world through the critic's eyes. Find out how he/she interpreted the specific actions that led to these feelings. This tactic will often disarm the "roaring lion" and lay the foundation for a more reasonable discussion.

2. DISARMING THE CRITIC

The second part of this conflict-resolution strategy involves "disarming the critic." Burns (1981) states:

> *"If someone is shooting at you, you have three choices: You can stand and shoot back--this usually leads to warfare and mutual destruction; you can run away or try to dodge the bullets--this often results in humiliation and a loss of self-esteem; or you can stay put and skillfully disarm your opponent. I have found that this third solution is by far the most satisfying. When you take the wind out of the other person's sails, you end up the winner and your opponent more often than not will also feel like a winner."*

In reading the next set of ideas for "disarming," remember to "disarm" in conjunction with empathy. They are not mutually exclusive.

- Whether the critic is right or wrong, initially find some way to agree with the individual.
- Avoid sarcasm or defensiveness.
- Always speak the truth.

Even when sure that the person's comments are nonsense, agree in principle with the criticism, or find some grain of truth in the statement and agree with that, or acknowledge that the reason the person is upset is understandable because it is based on how she or he perceives the situation. This can even be as simple as stating "I'm terribly sorry I seem incompetent to you. It must be quite disturbing to you." If said in a sincere manner, the angry critic will soon lose steam. This individual will now be in a better mood to communicate.

Since these two parts of the strategy, "empathy" and "disarming the critic," are not going to come naturally, it may be of benefit to practice with a friend, or visualize the process, or write out imaginary dialogues with a hostile person. After each imagined blasphemous statement from the "other person," visualize or write down how one might answer using the empathy and disarming techniques.

Avoid the natural tendency to defend yourself when unjustly accused. Defending yourself is a "major mistake," according to Dr. Burns (1981). "If you give in to this tendency, you will find that the intensity of your opponent's attack increases. You will paradoxically be adding bullets to that person's arsenal every time you defend yourself."

3. FEEDBACK AND NEGOTIATION

The last part of the strategy is comprised of "feedback and negotiation." After listening to the critic, use empathy and disarm him/her by reaching agreement on some point. This establishes a position to tactfully and assertively explain reasons for positions and emotions. This opens the discussion to negotiate any real differences which may remain unsettled.

What does one do if the critic is just plain wrong? In this instance, express an objective viewpoint with an acknowledgment that it might be wrong. Base the conflict on fact rather than personality or pride. Avoid directing destructive labels at the critic. Remember, his error does not make him stupid, worthless, or inferior. Sometimes the solution will be in between. In this case, negotiations and compromises are necessary. There may be a need to settle for part of what is wanted. If the empathy and disarming techniques have earnestly been used first, more of what is wanted will probably be gained.

There may be some cases where the administrator will be wrong and the critic will be correct. In this case, the critic's respect for the administrator will probably increase substantially if there is agreement with the criticism. Thank the person for providing the information and apologize for any problems that might have been caused. Don't let defensiveness inhibit the use of common sense.

When faced with a heckler in the audience while conducting a meeting, the following steps may be useful in silencing the person in an inoffensive manner:

Method for Diffusing a Heckler

1. Immediately thank the person for his or her comments.
2. Acknowledge that the points brought up by the person are indeed important.
3. Emphasize that there is a need for more knowledge about the points raised.
4. Encourage the critic to pursue meaningful research and investigation of the topic.
5. Invite the heckler to share her or his views with you further after the close of the meeting or class.

This may be helpful when there is an especially contentious teacher in the faculty room or community member at a board meeting. In the case of board meetings, school administrators should remember that the responsibility of controlling board meetings rests with the board chairperson.

Whether working with others to help resolve conflict, or when personally on the firing line, identifying the nature of the conflict and using a collaborative approach can release energy and establish commitment to the solution. The use of a systematic conflict resolution process can make conflict a source of organizational and personal growth. It takes two to make an argument, but it also takes two working together to make a successful negotiation.

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Appendix 5-A

SUMMARY OF CONFLICT-RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Conflict-Resolution Strategy	Goal of Strategy	Appropriate Situations
Ignoring the conflict	Avoidance	When the issue is trivial When the issue is symptomatic of more basic, pressing problems
Imposing a solution	Avoidance	When quick, decisive action is needed When unpopular decisions must be made and consensus among the groups appears very unlikely
Smoothing	Defusion	As a stop-gap measure to let people cool down and regain their perspective. When the conflict is over non-work issues
Superordinate goals	Defusion	When there is a mutually important goal that neither group can achieve without the cooperation of the other When the survival or success of the total organization is in jeopardy
Representatives	Containment	Before the groups' positions become fixed and made public When each side is represented by groups of representatives rather than by one spokesperson
Structuring the interaction	Containment	When previous attempts to openly discuss conflict issues led to conflict escalation rather than to problem solution When a respected third party is available to provide structure and serve as a mediator
Bargaining	Containment	When the two groups have relatively equal power When there are several acceptable alternative solutions that both parties are willing to consider
Problem solving	Confrontation	When there is a minimum level of trust between the groups and there is no pressure for a quick solution When the organization can benefit from merging the different perspectives and insights of both groups in making key decisions
Organizational redesign	Confrontation	When the sources of conflict result from the coordination of work Self-contained work groups are most appropriate when the work easily can be divided into clear project responsibilities; lateral relationships are more appropriate when activities require much interdepartmental coordination but do not clearly lie within any one department's responsibilities

Chapter 6

Stress and Time Management

"Time is the scarcest resource, and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed."

– Peter Drucker

The Effective Executive

CHAPTER 6

STRESS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

The work of rural administrative leaders is stressful. They are overworked, constantly under fire, and unappreciated. Many are contemplating early retirement. Many are also functioning at levels far below their abilities because of prolonged stress.

Roberson and Matthews (1988)

Stress and time management are real issues for rural administrators since they have multiple responsibilities in their jobs. Some are superintendents with no central office assistance. This means they are also business managers, personnel administrators, transportation directors, public relations coordinators, curriculum directors, and the list continues to include the role of principal for some as well as that of teacher for others. In a recent poll conducted by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), the majority of rural leaders from the Northwest listed stress and time management as major concerns. This chapter includes discussions of the following topic areas:

- common causes of stress
- symptoms and signs of stress
- handling and reducing stress
- time management strategies

I. CAUSES OF STRESS

Donald Dudley and Elton Welke (1977) define stress as "an adaptive response in which your body prepares, or adjusts, to a threatening situation." Stress is manifested through physical symptoms as well as psychological symptoms. Stress can greatly diminish the effectiveness of a rural administrator since stress can produce a lack of energy and lack of clear thinking processes.

Frances Roberson and Kenneth Matthews (1988) surveyed public school administrators to identify the ten most frequent job related stressors. Not surprisingly, they found that the most frequent source of stress was related to having a workload they considered unreasonable. Their findings correspond to the frustrations expressed by rural administrators from the Northwest. The

following list contains the most frequently identified causes of stress, stressors, in rank order:

TEN MOST FREQUENT STRESSORS (IN RANK ORDER)

1. Demands to participate in school activities outside normal working hours
2. Demands of a workload that is too heavy to finish during the normal work day
3. Being interrupted by telephone calls
4. Trying to complete reports and other paperwork on time
5. Feeling that meetings take too much of my time
6. Having to make decisions that affect the lives of others
7. Complying with state and federal rules and policies
8. Evaluating staff members' performances
9. Trying to gain public approval for school programs
10. Trying to resolve differences between and among staff members

Since these findings alone did not state that the most frequent stressors also are the most intense, Roberson examined the intensity of the stress caused by these same ten stressors. He found that the rank order of the intensity or potency of the stressors differed from the frequency rank order. Listed below are the stressors in rank order of their intensity. Note that the most potent stressors were related to having an unreasonable workload.

TEN MOST INTENSE STRESSORS (IN RANK ORDER)

1. Feeling that meetings take too much of my time
2. Trying to complete reports and other paperwork on time
3. Feeling that I have too heavy a workload to finish during the normal work day
4. Feeling that I have to participate in school activities outside normal working hours
5. Complying with state and federal rules and policies
6. Having to make decisions that affect the lives of others
7. Trying to gain public approval (financial support) for school programs
8. Trying to resolve differences between and among staff members
9. Being interrupted by telephone calls
10. Evaluating staff members' performances

Additionally, Roberson found that the frequency with which administrators experienced individual stressors was significantly related to the intensity of the resulting stress. He concluded that "if one is bothered frequently by a particular stressor, the resulting stress may become intense over time, even if the stressor is only a minor irritation initially" (Roberson and Matthews, 1988).

Walter Gmelch (1981) compiled a list of stressors that corresponds to the aforementioned lists. However, one item that is not on the previous lists is "imposing excessively high expectations on myself." Rural school administrators have many roles to fill and expectations increase with each additional role. Not only do rural administrators place excessively high expectations on themselves, but the high degree of visibility, frequently expected by rural communities, can intensify stress.

In addition to stress related to the job of being a rural administrator, there are the stressors that arise from living. Some additional sources of stress include:

- Major life changes--i.e., moving, new job, deaths, divorce. It is considered by some that people are facing a lot of stress if they have two or more major life changes in a year.
- Relationships--i.e., having difficulties with others, unease with co-workers or spouse. Please note that this was a major source of stress on the list of stressors for rural administrators.

- Time urgency--i.e., doing more with fewer people. For rural administrators, time urgency is a major stressor. The time management section of this chapter provides ideas of how to better handle this stressor.
- Perfectionism--i.e., having trouble delegating because it is difficult to let others work on a project and the feeling that that project must be perfect before passing it on.
- Procrastination--i.e., finding other things to work on rather than working on the project that needs to be done.

Distinctions also can be made between short-term stressors and long-term stressors. Crisis situations or blow-ups are sources of short-term stressors. Living or working with someone with whom there are clashes on an ongoing basis are sources for long-term stressors. Other situations of long-term stress are having aging parents, living with teenagers at home, having a job where one feels that he/she does not fit in, and living in environmental dissonance (working in a community or city where one does not feel comfortable). Job and role ambiguity are contributors of long-term stress. Sandra Huffstutter (1981, p. 270) states, "A job can be inherently stressful (hence worsening each daily occasion of stress) if one's role is unclear or subject to conflicting expectations, or if the job involves too much work, too little work, too little opportunity for achievement, and/or inadequate performance evaluation."

II. SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

The National Institute of Mental Health (1987) has determined that the most important characteristics of psychological stress is a sense of a loss of control, and a loss of the ability to predict events. These are crucial in inducing and sustaining prolonged stress. This prolonged stress results in several physical symptoms such as an unhealthy aging process in the brain and other body systems. Neuroscientists have long suspected that stress plays a major role in the aging process. Too much stress also can cause physical illness such as high blood pressure, ulcers, or even heart disease.

Employee Assistance Services (1988) have compiled a list of stress signals. These are situations that trigger an increase in the stress level of one's life. Being able to recognize the early symptoms of stress and then doing something about them can assist in improving the quality of life, and, consequently, effectiveness as a rural school administrator.

Signs of Stress

1. Finding yourself restless, jittery and unable to relax
2. Being irritable and given to anger if things don't go your way

3. Having difficulty concentrating or focusing your attention on just one thing
4. Losing your interest in your usual hobbies or pastimes
5. Worrying about things you cannot control
6. Having frequent nervous indigestion
7. Eating or smoking more when you feel tense
8. Having frequent headaches or tenseness in your neck and back
9. Fearing that you have lost sight of what is really important to you
10. Drinking alcohol or taking tranquilizers or other drugs to help you relax

Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) reported additional negative effects of stress. These include impaired speech, anxiety, hypersensitivity to criticism, increased heart rate, trembling, apathy, fatigue, excessive eating (or loss of appetite), aggression, depression, numbness, increased blood pressure, sweating, dilation of the pupils, and impulsive behavior.

Michael and Delores Giammatteo (1980) identified certain attitudes that promote stress: authoritarianism (excessively directive communications); intolerance (excessively negative communications); failure to express feelings (excessively repressed communications); being overly concerned with what "should be" rather than with "what is;" worry, stockpiling hurts, believing that one is a victim of fate and of one's feelings; needing and seeking love and approval from everyone; indecisiveness, perfectionism--searching for the one "perfect" solution to every problem; and magnifying minor irritants.

With the above list of unhealthy attitudes, it becomes clear that communication is a key strategy in the management of stress. Sandra Huffstutter (1981) states, "It's important to recognize that the words you use--and choose not to use--don't merely describe reality, they create it."

Psychologists Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith (1983) at Boston University Medical Center developed an assessment tool to determine how vulnerable one is to stress. These are preventive as well as stress-reducing methods. In order to use the assessment tool, score each of the following statements according to how much of the time each statement personally applies. Score each item from 1 (almost always) to 5 (never).

How Vulnerable Are You to Stress?

1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.
2. I get seven to eight hours sleep at least four nights a week.
3. I give and receive affection regularly.
4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.
6. I smoke less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.
7. I take fewer than five alcoholic drinks per week.
8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.
10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.
11. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
13. I regularly attend club or social activities.
14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, teeth).
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.
16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems, e.g., chores, money, and daily-living issues.
17. I do something for fun at least once a week.
18. I am able to organize my time effectively.
19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or tea or cola drinks) a day.
20. I take quiet time for myself during the day.

To score, add up the figures and subtract 20. Any number over 30 indicates a vulnerability to stress. One is seriously vulnerable if the score is between 50 and 75, and extremely vulnerable if it is over 75. To take a proactive stance towards both reducing stress and preventing stress, work towards getting your total score as far under 30 as is reasonable.

III. HANDLING AND REDUCING STRESS

If, after reviewing the list of stressors and resultant symptoms, one realizes that he/she is harboring excessive stress, a prescriptive plan for reducing this stress should be formulated. A prescriptive plan can be of great benefit even if one does not exhibit symptoms of stress. Stress is considered a subjective phenomenon, "it is all in the mind." This makes awareness even more important so that proper attitudes and relaxing activities can be incorporated into one's daily routine.

Some of the common sense, often effective methods of handling stress include discussing problems with others (rather than withdrawing), organizing and setting priorities, becoming involved in social and recreational activities, attending to physical well-being through exercise, dieting, and vacations, and giving serious consideration to a career change if feelings of stress continues unabated.

Walter Gmelch (1978), in his article "The Principal's Next Challenge: The Twentieth Century Art of Managing Stress," explained stress as being integrally related to the sense of powerlessness--feeling out of control. He described successful stress management as requiring both the identification of the stressors as well as a categorization of them into those that are within one's control and those that are not. This distinction will determine the strategy for getting at the stressor which returns a sense of control. When one is faced with the feeling of having no control over a negative issue (stressor), a recommendation is to do something that the individual can control, i.e., wash dishes, mow the lawn, jog, or exercise.

When stressors are beyond the administrator's personal control (such as a budget cut), reduce stress in an area that can be controlled: one's inner self. James Manuso (1979) recommends taking two deep breaths, and deliberately relaxing the jaw, the shoulders and tongue, and telling oneself not to allow one's body to be involved in the stress.

Another method of dealing with stress is to mentally shout "Stop!" when obsessive or worrisome thoughts begin to enter one's mind. One can choose to not think about that particular topic now, and then consciously shift thoughts to another activity or topic.

Many experts believe tension can be relieved by looking for the humor in life's daily tensions and problems. Some recommend keeping items close by that help to "lighten up" and laugh. Some of these items may include jokes, cartoons, comic cassettes, funny books, humorous calendars, or a funny poster.

Stress Reducing Attitudes

To keep the stress in your life under control, Dr. Hans Selye (1974), an endocrinologist, recommends a daily dose of self-assessment to evaluate how one handles stress. Dr. Selye also suggested the following attitude changes:

- Keep the pleasant aspects of your life in mind
- Don't dwell on failures
- Don't procrastinate; doing so only intensifies stress
- Set worthy goals for yourself; don't waste time and effort on the trivial
- Strive for improvement, but not perfection; you don't always have to prove yourself to be a worthwhile person
- Seek your own level of challenge and dare to risk a change in your life; take control

Researchers have learned that humans have a fairly good capacity to handle huge doses of short-term stress--and if they do so effectively, the results can be positive, or "good" stress. Good stress is pressure that motivates one to move on and provides stimulation to bring about a good outcome. It fosters success and self-esteem.

Don't be fooled. There's no such thing as a good stress reaction versus a bad stress reaction. All stress causes the fight-or-flight response, which leads to wear and tear on the body. The important issue here is how one deals with a stressful situation--that will dictate how much wear and tear stress inflicts. In fact, researchers have been able to pinpoint key components of the personalities of those people who take stress and turn it into something positive. They determined that the characteristics of the resilient type are: a good sense of self; ability to look at life's changes as challenges rather than threats; use of stressful situations to achieve goals; a solid sense of purpose and a commitment in life.

Being proactive to stressors that exist in one's life will minimize the negative effects of stress. The following list provides a systematic procedure for confronting controllable stressors (Gmelch, 1981, p.43):

Confronting Stressors

1. Identify your most bothersome controllable stressors and select ONE to resolve.
2. Search for the causes of this stressful event.

3. Generate a set of possible solutions to remedy the causes.
4. Specify a plan of action you will take to alleviate one cause.
5. Develop a timetable to implement your plan of action.
6. Set a date and method for how you will follow-up and evaluate the effectiveness of your plan.
7. Investigate the potential problems or unintended consequences (additional stress) your action plan may have created.

Consider the consequences of any solutions generated. It is important to ensure that the solutions relieve the stress, not add to or replace the current stress.

The feeling of being in control is central to stress reduction. It's not how busy one is or how many responsibilities one has, but the way one views demanding situations and how one reacts to them that are crucial. It all boils down to how much one feels in control of one's life.

One will feel in control when able to deal with problems, find solutions, and bring about a change for the better, personally and professionally.

IV. TIME MANAGEMENT

Peter Drucker (1966), an expert in management says, "Time is the scarcest resource, and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed," and Lakein (1974) notes, "Time is life. It is irreversible and irreplaceable. To waste your time is to waste your life, but to master your time is to make your life and make the most of it."

To attack the problem of productivity, school administrators need to attack not only the symptoms, but also the source of the problem--the way they plan, organize, and carry out the key anxiety-provoking requirements of their jobs. Here are several questions which focus on the efficiency of time management. They are adapted from Ronald Ashkenas and Robert Schaffer's (1982) "Managers Can Avoid Wasting Time." In answering these questions, think about ways to better manage the time available.

Questions for Analyzing Time Habits and Patterns

My Daily Routine

1. Which activities of my day are the most productive? Which are the least? How much time is spent on each?

2. How much of each day is simply lost through frittering hours away, interruptions, and so on?

3. Do I have any daily routines that have not been tested lately for efficiency?

Responding to Challenges

1. How much of my time is spent on improvement or innovation? How much on maintenance and fire-fighting? What should the proportions be?

2. Do I have clearly defined and measurable improvement goals, or are they vague?

3. When the pressure comes down for better results, do I ever take action before analyzing what's really needed?

Asking Staff to Meet My Expectations

1. What do I feel most or least confident about asking my staff to do?

2. How well do I convey to my staff the expectations I have for them? Or do they seem to have ways of negotiating my expectations downward?

3. Do I get reports at short-interval checkpoints to make sure things are moving in the right direction?

Along with answering these questions, one may find it helpful to implement a system of analyzing how his/her time is used. Ashkenas and Schaffer (1982) suggest these ideas:

1. Make more careful entries into your appointment book, thus not only using them as reminders but also as logs.

2. Rate meetings according to their effective use of time.

3. At the end of each day, spend five or ten minutes (possibly with a secretary) reconstructing the day and noting key activities, time spent, and other important quantifiable factors.

4. Analysis of deliberately planned time versus spontaneous or interrupted time is helpful.

5. Administrators can keep a log about time spent in an average week or month.

Peter Drucker (1966) states, "Effective executives know where their time goes." By answering the preceding questions and actually keeping track of where the time goes, one can begin the important first step in gaining control of his/her day.

Roberson and Matthews (1988) developed a list of ideas to reduce the time demands and, consequently, the stress of the school administrator's job. These are particularly useful for the rural administrator since rural administrators are more frequently and more intensely stressed by having a workload that is often more demanding than that of their peers in urban schools. These ideas are long-term, coping strategies that focus on reducing the time required to complete one's work.

Reducing the Stress of Time

1. Make a list of tasks to be done by the end of each day.
2. Start working on the most important task each day--prioritize. Work only on important tasks. If it is not important for you to work on, don't do it. Or if someone else can do it, delegate it to any legitimate and available person who has the ability to complete the task. Look at community members and parents as possible sources of assistance as appropriate.
3. Do it correctly the first time. If it is important enough for you to do, then it is important enough to do it right the first time.
4. Stop working at a fixed time each day. Don't work past that time on anything.
5. Don't try to please everyone. You can't please everyone so why stress yourself by trying to do it? Know what is important about your job and work on pleasing yourself by doing the important jobs well. Once you have done exceptionally well the things you believe are really important, you will find that your level of stress has been reduced considerably.
6. Find a place you can work undisturbed for at least an hour each day. You will find that you accomplish much more during this undisturbed hour than you would in two or three hours that are constantly interrupted.
7. Work when you are on the job. Don't waste time on the job.
8. Schedule some personal time and protect this time by actually writing it in on your calendar.
9. Get involved in improving your skills by going to conferences, taking classes, and calling or visiting other rural administrators to see how they handle the kind of tasks that bother you. Just having the opportunity to talk with your peers is stress-reducing.

One study found that workers who felt they could confide in co-workers had less stress than those who didn't (Roesch, 1979). As a rural administrator, the support system of peers may mean traveling to other communities to talk with other rural administrators. One recommendation is to develop a system of mutual support with another rural administrator and make definite appointments to meet/talk on a regular basis. If distances are a factor that make such meetings

impractical, use the telephone. Psychologists have often argued for a primary preventive approach to burnout, stressing the need for collaboration, support and comradery to be fulfilled on a regular basis.

Having available a strong network of people in whom one can confide determines much of how one copes with life's ups and downs. Often isolation breeds chronic stress, while sharing emotions with others leads to a sense of well-being. On a personal basis, social support usually involves a network of family and friends who provide the validation of a professional's self-worth that may be lacking at work. Strong personal support systems buffer the impact of work-related stress and lessen the probability or severity of burnout.

Activity Prioritization

As activities are tracked, try to categorize each on the basis of its importance. Michael Sexton and Karen Switzer (1978) suggest the following rating system:

1. Professional Goal Functions (long-range planning and leadership activities; curriculum planning, for example)
2. Critical/Crisis Functions (immediate, situational concerns; teacher conflict, for example)
3. Maintenance Functions (routine administrative tasks; safety patrol, lunch counts, for example)
4. Personal Activities (calling home, going to the dentist)

Even though the primary responsibility of a leader is to engage in #1, a time log will likely be comprised of #2 and #3. Patrick Duignan (1980) found, "The superintendent is precluded from long-range planning and other leadership functions by virtue of the incredibly interruptive and discontinuous nature of his or her workday." Duignan observed, "Within the superintendent's typical 8.2 hour, work-through-lunch workday, he or she engages in about thirty-eight disparate activities, nearly 40 percent of which lasted less than five minutes each." It would be safe to say that this is similar for principals and vice-principals as well.

If this is true of the administrator's time log, he/she is working in a reactive rather than proactive mode. One should learn how to use #2 and #3 efficiently so that there will be time to do #1 effectively (Sexton and Switzer, 1978). To put the workday into a more productive mode, institute some time savers.

Time Savers

Meet with Yourself

Administrators must value their own time before expecting others to do the same, which means that total accessibility--the "open-door" policy--is professionally counter-productive.

Most time-management experts recommend scheduling regular blocks of time during which the administrator is inaccessible to visitors and telephone calls. Since people accept that one is inaccessible while in a meeting, call this block of time a "meeting with yourself," which it is. Have all calls intercepted and make yourself invisible behind the closed door of your office. Studies show that this will likely be the only productive work time available during the entire day. This is the opposite of what administrators do during periods of accessibility when they are visible in the staff lounge at lunch time, in halls before school, and in the meeting room before board meetings.

Say No

Peter Drucker (1966) suggests reviewing your daily time log with this question in mind: "What would happen if this were not done at all?" He asserts that 25 percent of one's time demands can be reduced with no significant effect. Thus, if a task is not a priority item, simply and courteously refuse, with perhaps a brief explanation of time constraints.

W. A. Mambert, as cited by Huffstutter (1981), recommends the "Wash Decision, a decision to not proceed with a project when complications begin to outweigh the value of the final result." When deciding to say "yes" or "no" to any activity, the bottom line should be consideration of the school district's primary purpose(s). Also, consider who is making the request for available time. If it is a superior, then one must respond to the demand. If a peer, then one may choose whether to respond to the request. If the demand is made by a subordinate, it may be an inappropriate use of time. Requests such as these are usually best filled by others or referred to other sources of information.

Keep Paperwork at a Minimum

Donna Douglass and Merrill Douglass (1979) contend that "there are only three kinds of paperwork: action items, information items, and throw-away items."

Action Items

- One of Lakein's (1974, p.79) laws says "handle each piece of paper only once." Donna and Merrill Douglass estimate, "at least 80 percent of the mail could be answered immediately when read." They suggest that these items be handled quickly, in order of priority, and at a scheduled time of the day.
- Lakein (1974, p. 75) advocates a "procrastination drawer"--dump low priority items into it and see if they are ever missed.
- Delegate paperwork to a secretary. Pencil a brief note of response in the margin of incoming correspondence, and have a secretary draft the formal response from that.
- Gilbert Weldy (1974) suggests categorizing action items into separately labeled manila folders: "urgent," "dictate," "to do," "for Faculty Bulletin," etc.
- Use time-saving paperwork expediters, i.e., routing slips, attachment slips, form letters, form paragraphs, hand written responses and the telephone.
- Start a "tickler" filing system. Use manila folders labeled January through December to keep track of upcoming tasks, commitments or annual responsibilities. For example, if budget estimates are due in April, put a reminder in March's file that it is time to begin accumulating the necessary data. Use a daily tickler file the same way with folders labeled one through thirty-one.

Information Items

- Schedule a yearly spring cleaning of files, with an effort to throw away as much as possible. Many, if not most, of the items in the "procrastination drawer" can be discarded.
- Some studies have estimated that 95 percent of all papers filed are never retrieved again. Before filing an item, ask yourself: "Does this item fit into the 'useful filing' category?" "Could I retrieve this information from someone else's files, if needed?" What use shall I make of this item within the next year?"
- Keep journals, articles, and updates in one section of your shelves, ready for availability when heading out to dentist appointments or business trips.

Goal Setting and Prioritizing

To control the use of time on a daily basis, first prioritize goals. Because rural administrators are concerned with complex issues and with long as well as short time frames, it is easy to slip into a "busyness" mode. The following are strategies to help infuse work-planning and control disciplines into the day:

1. Break a few long-term or complex management tasks into sequential short-term, well-defined projects. Then set about to achieve these subgoals within weeks rather than months.

2. Block off the "busyness" escape routes by gradually infusing these projects with work-planning disciplines such as sharp definition of goals, clear-cut accountability, written work plans, time tables, explicit measurements.

3. After achieving a few modest, incremental subgoals using disciplined attacks, expand and accelerate the process. Attack goals at once and capture a larger share of the overall job with measured work plans.

Daily planning can be done first thing in the morning or last thing in the evening. Using a "to do" list, systematically prioritize the tasks according to Sexton and Switzer's #1, #2, and #3 system or Lakein's (1974, p.71) 80/20 system which will help in knowing what to do first.

[T]he 80/20 rule suggests that in a list of ten items, doing two of them will yield most (80 percent) of the value. Find these two, label them A, get them done. Leave most of the other eight undone, because the value gained from them will be significantly less than that of the two highest-value items....It's important to remind yourself again and again not to get bogged down on low-value activities but to focus on the 20 percent where the high value is (Lakein, 1974, p.74).

Scheduled appointments should be included in the "to do" list. Remember to schedule a block of quiet time to work on leadership activities. After establishing the school's mission, it will be easier to determine priorities because the most important direction for the school organization will be known. Work on those goals that influence accomplishing this direction or mission. (See Chapter 7 on Vision Building.)

Delegate

After the "to do" list has been formulated, assess each activity to determine what can be delegated. Tasks that can be delegated are ones that do not advance any contribution to the school's primary purpose. Routine tasks may be tasks at which others are more skilled, and tasks which are actively disliked should be delegated.

Taking Action

With these tips for managing time, the only thing that will stop this process is the waster called procrastination. Lakein (1974) suggests several methods to eliminate procrastination: set deadlines and announce them to someone else;

give self-rewards for subtasks completed; gather additional information and data; work for five minutes a day at a task that has been put off; and again, reduce a large task into small subtasks.

Ray Cross (1980) suggests implementing one time-management strategy at a time. Once the new strategy has been internalized to the point where it is a habit, add another.

Darrell Lewis and Tor Dahl (1975) say, "It is generally accepted that most managers should be able to clear about 25 percent of their time with little or no drop in current output."

Rural administrators can, of course, supplement these strategies with other procedures such as simplifying forms, focusing and shortening meetings, and streamlining communication. With regard to staff meetings, holding morning meetings can ensure brevity; the start of the student school day forces an end to the meeting. For efficient meetings, prepare an agenda and circulate it with staff before the meeting. Solicit input from staff for any additional agenda items that may need attention. With diligence, one can create an on-going process to save time which will contribute to stress reduction.

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Chapter 7

Vision Building

"... without values and vision there is no future, and leadership deals with the future."

– Richard Wolfe
Gonzaga University

CHAPTER 7

VISION BUILDING

One of the key characteristics of a successful leader in a rural school is the ability to articulate objectives and goals which are based on an understanding of constituent needs and projected trends; elicit support from key people; and work with constituents to develop an action plan. This is VISION!

Sid Eder, University of Idaho

Vision is key to instructional leadership--it focuses the attention of the organization on what is valued so that improvement can take place. A mission is "the special task or purpose established for a person or an institution...it is the shared vision of people in an organization about what their ultimate purpose really is" (NASSP, 1987). Thus, a mission is a long-term vision of what the organization is or is striving to become. When a vision is shared throughout the organization, it becomes a mission. Everyone in the organization needs to be committed to the vision. Having the needed commitment allows the vision statement to become an effective tool in making decisions.

This chapter provides a checklist to determine the health of your district's mission and a method for developing a vision for your school and ways of infusing the school administrator's vision into his/her decisions regarding school improvement.

Read the following statements. Then respond by checking "Yes" or "No" to each statement signifying how it applies to your district. A majority of "No" responses indicates a need to seriously consider the steps to mission building as proposed in this chapter.

MISSION STATEMENT CHECKLIST

Design

- Does the district have a mission statement which gives direction for program planning?
  Yes__ No__

- Is the long-range planning of the district directed toward fulfilling the district's mission?
  Yes__ No__

- Is there provision for updating the district mission statement every three to five years?
  Yes__ No__

- Is the district mission statement future oriented enough to facilitate long-range planning for the next five to ten years?
  Yes__ No__

- Did the development of the district mission statement involve representatives from the appropriate populations?
  Yes__ No__

Delivery

- Is the mission of the district communicated to the board, administration, staff (professional and support), parents and non-patrons?
  Yes__ No__

- Is there commitment among the staff to the goals and purposes identified by the mission statement?
  Yes__ No__

- Does the mission statement guide the identification of priorities of the district for materials, acquisition, curriculum development and inservice training?
  Yes__ No__

- Does the mission statement serve as a unifying force in the district?
  Yes__ No__

A vision may be used in planning through translation into goals for students and instructors as well as deciding on the method to accomplish the goals. The

vision is helpful in monitoring school practices to decide if they lead to achieving the established vision.

The vision of a school should be written in a simple, clear and concise statement. Certain components should be part of the vision.

The statement should start out: "(Name) school is committed, above all else, to _____." The blank should be filled in with those student outcomes that are truly important to your school. How does the school administrator come to any consensus as to what is his/her primary purpose? The National Association of Secondary School Principals (1987) suggest the following steps:

Developing a Mission Statement

1. Get commitment from those involved with the school to develop a mission statement. This may be done via a decision with parents, community/board, teachers, or students about the necessity of a school vision and what they believe the special purpose of the school is, how it will be developed and how it will be used in decisions for the school. The discussion may be formal or informal.

2. Assemble the group that will actually draft the mission statement. Experts say that this working group should not exceed 10 members but should include a district and school level administrator, a parent, a non-parent community member, a non-certified staff member, teachers and students.

3. Gather data from teachers, students, community, and board members regarding their beliefs and purposes for the school. Suggested questions include:

    - What skills, attitudes and behaviors should students leaving our school have to be successful?
    - What do you think the ultimate purpose of our school should be?
    - What should our school be doing to really serve the interests of this community?
    - In order to be considered successful, what one thing should our school accomplish for its students or this community?

    This interviewing should be done by the members of the working group (step 2). Notes should be taken so accuracy will be maintained.

4. Identify the entire spectrum of possible missions for the school by analyzing responses collected during the interviews. Make sure that the list includes only those statements that are purposes and not activities. "To prepare students for life in a technological society" would be a purpose or mission. "Raise test scores" would be an activity.

5. Seek consensus on which of these possible missions is the most widely accepted mission. This can be done in a variety of ways. The method suggested by NASSP is to develop a printed survey instrument using a Likert-Scale response where each statement offers a response range from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree). This survey should be given to a large number of the school's constituents with instructions to mark the number that expresses their agreement or disagreement with the possible school missions.

6. Review the survey results to determine which mission statement has universal or near-universal agreement. From this information the task group drafts a corresponding mission statement.

7. Present the mission statement to the stakeholders so that they may consider the implications for them. This may be done at the group's meetings (i.e., parent organizations, student council, school board) or discussed on a more informal basis with at least two to three members of each stakeholder group. These groups also should be asked to endorse the statement or make modifications necessary for them to endorse it.

8. Draft a final version of the mission statement incorporating as many of the recommendations as possible. It would be wise to inform those who made suggestions for revisions that were not used as to why they were not. The crucial thing to remember is to make the mission statement short and easily remembered.

9. Disseminate the final draft to as many people as possible, including parents, students, all school staff members, major civic organizations, and the local newspaper. Discuss with the staff and student council as to how the mission statement would be used in making decisions about programs, policies and individual behavior.

10. Assess how the statement is impacting the school's operation. Suggested questions include:

    - Has the statement affected school practices and individual behavior?
    - Has the effect of the statement been good?
    - Is the statement being interpreted as intended?
    - What unforeseen events emerged because of this statement?

    By regularly assessing the mission statement of the school, the likelihood that the mission will be a vital document is enhanced.

This process involves many people, and, in so doing, helps assure acceptance. However, there is another important step: making the mission statement a powerful management tool. It gives the administrator and staff a way of deciding if what they are currently doing coincides with what they believe. It also gives them a relatively simple standard to set goals and priorities of the school. Ask the questions: "What are we doing now to facilitate this mission? What should we be doing to advance this mission?" The mission statement also links the school's reward and belief systems. Celebratory activities can be developed to focus attention on the mission.

Thinking about the purposes of schooling can be helpful when developing a mission statement. NWREL Rural Education Specialist Andy Sommer (1988) has comprised a list of ten purposes of schooling based on the works of John Goodlad in A Place Called School (1984); Dale Parnell in The Neglected Majority (1985); Ernest Boyer in High School (1983); and Mort Adler in Paidea Proposal (1984).

These ten purposes and their subpurposes address the knowledge, skills, and attitudes graduates should have:

A. Live Harmoniously With Others:

1. Develop a knowledge of opposing value systems and their influence on the individual and society.

2. Develop an understanding of how members of a family function under different family patterns as well as within one's own family.

3. Develop skill in communicating effectively in groups.

4. Develop the ability to identify with and advance the goals and concerns of others.

5. Learn to form productive and satisfying relations with others based on respect, trust, cooperation, consideration, and caring.

6. Develop a concern for humanity and an understanding of international relations, including an appreciation of cultures different from one's own.

B. Comprehend Culture:

1. Develop insight into the values and characteristics, including language, of the civilization of which one is a member.

2. Develop an awareness and understanding of one's cultural heritage and become familiar with the achievements of the past that have inspired humanity.

3. Understand and adopt the norms, values, and traditions of the groups of which one is a member.

4. Develop an understanding of the manner in which traditions from the past operate today and influence the direction and values of society.

C. Grow Intellectually:

1. Develop the ability to think rationally, including problem solving skills, application of principles of logic, and skill in using different modes of inquiry.

2. Develop the ability to use and evaluate knowledge, i.e., the critical and independent thinking which enables one to make judgments and decisions in a wide variety of life roles--citizen, consumer, worker--as well as in intellectual activities.

3. Accumulate a general fund of knowledge, including information and concepts, in mathematics, literature, natural science, and the social sciences.

4. Develop positive attitudes toward intellectual activity, including curiosity and a desire for further learning.

D. Be Self-Reliant:

1. Develop productive habits and attitudes, such as pride in good workmanship, independence and self-motivation.

2. Develop economic and consumer skills necessary for making informed choices which will enhance one's quality of life.

3. Develop moral integrity and an understanding of the necessity for ethical conduct.

E. Act as Responsible Citizens in a Democratic Society:

1. Develop historical perspective and knowledge of the basic workings of the government.
2. Develop a commitment to the values of liberty, representative government, and one's responsibility for the welfare of all.
3. Develop an understanding of the basic interdependence of the biological and physical resources of the environment.
4. Exercise the democratic right to dissent in accordance with personal conscience.

F. Be Proficient in Basic Skills:

1. Learn to read, write, and perform basic arithmetic operations.
2. Learn to acquire ideas and communicate through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
3. Develop the ability to find and use available sources of information.
4. Learn to utilize mathematical concepts.

G. Value Creativity and the Arts:

1. Appreciate beauty, excellence and craftsmanship in a variety of fields.
2. Develop the ability to deal with problems in original ways and to be tolerant of new ideas.
3. Develop the willingness and ability to communicate through creative work in an active way.
4. Seek to contribute to cultural and social life through one's artistic, vocational, and avocational interests.

H. Preserve Personal Health and Safety:

1. Understand the risks and consequences of unhealthy and unsafe practices.

2. Understand the effects of behavior on emotional, social and physical health.

3. Learn to use leisure time effectively, including the development of physical fitness and recreational skills.

4. Develop the ability to engage in constructive self-criticism.

I. Understand the Demands of the Future:

1. Develop the flexibility and confidence to adapt to changes in our culture.

2. Develop the competence and skills for continuous adjustment and emotional stability, including coping with social and career changes.

3. Actively plan one's future.

J. Contribute Productively to the Economy:

1. Acquire marketable job skills.

2. Recognize career and entrepreneurial opportunities.

3. Learn how to select an occupation that will be personally satisfying and suitable to one's skills and interests.

4. Develop positive attitudes toward work, including acceptance of the necessity of making a living and an appreciation of the social value and dignity of work.

A mission statement that addresses any of the above purposes focuses on the school district's belief system relative to student outcomes.

When asked what was one key characteristic of a successful leader in a rural school setting, Richard Wolfe, Gonzaga University, said:

> *The leader must have a set of values which the followers can own. The leader must communicate these values through a vision for the future which indicates that each follower is cared about and has a role in this future.*

This characteristic is important because without values and vision there is no future and leadership deals with the future.

By developing the mission statement, the school will be defining its special reason for existing. In effective schools the mission is shared by the staff, students, administrators, and community. It expresses the one thing to which they are most committed. When a school knows where it is headed, it is easier to get there. This truly defines administrative leadership--SUPER-VISION!

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Chapter 8

Rural Teacher Recruitment, Induction and Retention

"Districts that provide supportive, stimulating work environments and communities that welcome educators will find teachers when others will not."

– M.C. Jensen
Oregon School Study Council

CHAPTER 8

RURAL TEACHER RECRUITMENT, INDUCTION AND RETENTION

Several studies indicate that the recruitment and retention of teachers for rural school districts are major problems. Rural school administrators are challenged each school year to successfully recruit and retain teachers.

Robert Carlson, University of Vermont and
William Matthes, University of Iowa (1985)

Teacher turnover in rural schools is higher than in urban or suburban settings--nearly 9 percent nationally in 1983 and much higher in many areas.

School administrators with the greatest difficulty recruiting teachers represent schools and communities which are often characterized as (Carlson and Matthes, 1985):

- Having small enrollments (often less than 300 students)
- Having fewer than 2,500 inhabitants
- Having limited school and community facilities
- Being located some distance from major metropolitan areas
- Tending to be insulated from societal trends or changes
- Existing in a fishbowl environment

This high rate of teacher mobility is an ongoing source of distress to rural administrators, teachers and community members concerned about the education of children in these schools. Frequent teacher turnover inhibits the development of a systematic, coherent academic program. The process of replacing teachers and inducting new ones consumes significant amounts of time and financial resources--resources which school and community people would much prefer to use for school programs and activities.

Although a certain number of new people with new ideas is welcome in most school environments, no school staff wants to feel that they are always beginning, starting over, or rebuilding the school's instructional team and

programs. In addition, school and community relations are strained when parents and community members are unable to form stable connections with school staff members. Administrators of rural schools with high teacher turnover generally are concerned about the problem and want to change it. Unfortunately, they are often hampered in their attempts to do so. For one thing, the published resources containing guidelines and tips for teacher selection and retention are often largely irrelevant to rural schools, since these schools frequently lack the size, budget, and organizational support needed to implement the strategies described in these resources.

In addition, rural school administrators usually are isolated from one another, and thus their access to one another to learn and share ideas for reducing turnover is limited. Finally, administrator turnover itself tends to be a problem in rural schools, disrupting the continuity of the school program.

This information was compiled for the rural school administrator who wishes to have a better understanding of the issues surrounding teacher turnover and to gain information which can help reduce staff turnover. District superintendents, staff, and board members also may wish to familiarize themselves with this information and use it in those aspects of their work that touch on teacher selection, induction and retention.

This section includes:

- A discussion of the reasons for the high teacher turnover rate in rural schools
- Information on effective strategies for recruiting teachers for these schools
- Ideas for developing a teacher induction program
- Information on proven methods for retaining teachers, including guidelines for administrative leadership

This report is based on efforts of Steven Nelson (1986) and Kathleen Cotton (1987) of Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. These efforts included a literature review, a survey of school principals in the Northwest, site visits, and a panel discussion of principals and superintendents in the Northwest, as well as a synthesis of this information.

The Teacher Turnover Problem

What causes high teacher turnover? Results of the literature review and principal survey indicate that high teacher mobility can be the result of teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and community characteristics.

Teacher Characteristics

What kinds of teachers choose to leave a rural school and community after living and working there only a short time? Researchers and survey respondents have identified several characteristics among teachers who tend not to stay in rural environments. They are likely to be relatively young and inexperienced (four or fewer years in the teaching field), and they are likely to be single. Perhaps most important, they are likely to be people who are from and/or prefer cities rather than small towns or rural areas. Thus, these teachers tend not to be the ones to put down roots in the rural community; they are likely to think of "home" as somewhere other than the community and to view their stay as temporary.

School Characteristics

When teachers leave a rural school and community, what school problems do they cite as contributing to their decision to leave? Researchers identify "administration" as the main reason teachers give for leaving. Specifically, teachers identify such things as lack of support for teachers by administrators; low academic standards; and policies concerning professional development, contractual agreements, personnel matters, and support services. Departing teachers also cite low salaries as influencing their decisions to leave. Other school factors correlated with high turnover in the survey included: small enrollments, limited availability of teacher housing, lack of opportunity for advancement, insufficient inservice, and inadequate curriculum development.

A common belief is that salary level is the main reason--or a main reason--teachers accept or leave positions. "Rural teachers in the United States earn an average of 40 percent less than their urban counterparts" (Reed and Busby, 1985). The general research on teacher recruitment, turnover, and related matters shows that other factors--particularly working conditions--are much more important. The research conducted for this project corroborates the general research and even suggests that unusually high salaries may be a deterrent to attracting applicants. While salary level is important to applicants, they may become suspicious of high salaries, fearing that these may represent compensation for poor school, community, or geographic conditions. However, it is important to pay teachers at least comparable salaries.

Community Characteristics

Geographic isolation from social, economic, and professional ties is a key factor in teacher turnover. Communities where there is greater support for education had less turnover than less supportive communities. This is a self-perpetuating, negative cycle.

What Can and Can't Be Done to Reduce Teacher Turnover

What can be done to reduce the incidence of teacher turnover in your school? In reviewing the factors related to teacher mobility, one can easily see that, in some cases, the answer is nothing. Geographic and economic conditions can't be altered by the administrative decision making process, nor can cultural or most other community factors. Indeed, one probably would not want to change these elements even if possible since the cultural and geographic attributes of rural schools are often their most appealing features. This means it is necessary to stress these attributes in a positive rather than negative fashion.

Fortunately, many of the factors associated with high teacher turnover are amenable to change. As noted previously, issues related to administration were the most frequently cited cause of teachers leaving rural schools. Among schools with low turnover, the most frequently cited reason given for staying was the quality of the school and its program--a good school with small classes, opportunities for professional growth, good working conditions, high teacher morale, job satisfaction, supportive administrative leadership, lower cost of living in rural areas, opportunities for independent teaching and decision making. Small and rural schools have a closeness and warmth said to be lacking in many large schools. Teachers want a sense of community within the school where students, teachers, and administrators form a partnership. These features must be emphasized during recruitment and retention activities.

In the sections which follow, suggestions are offered for reducing teacher turnover. These are based on research and administrator experience.

Teacher Recruitment and Selection

A. Desirable Rural Teacher Characteristics

Content area knowledge, instructional skills, and classroom management expertise are basic requirements for anyone seeking a teaching position anywhere. Beyond these basics, a number of other attributes are highly desirable for teachers in rural school settings.

Reviewing the research and survey results outlined earlier, a profile of the teacher most likely to leave a rural school and community emerges. This teacher

is young, unmarried, relatively inexperienced, and more geared by background and/or preference to a non-rural environment. This does not mean that a candidate with one or more of these characteristics ought to be automatically excluded from consideration. It does suggest, however, that an applicant who has most or all of these attributes may be a high risk in terms of his/her willingness to make a long-term commitment to the school and community. (School administrators are reminded that legal liabilities prevent the exclusion of applicants on the basis of marital status or age.)

Special effort should be made in the interview to ascertain the candidate's reasons for wishing to live and work in the community. Consider the candidate's maturity level: Is his/her life in order, and does he/she have clarity about personal and professional goals? This should help determine if an otherwise appealing candidate has a realistic understanding of the school and its setting and is likely to have the staying power that is being sought.

Assuming that the candidate possesses the required skills and knowledge, it is a definite plus if he/she is from the area where the school is located. Be especially cautious when screening and interviewing anyone who is seeking his/her first teaching job if this person has no rural experience. Getting a feel for teaching is a demanding experience. If a candidate is learning the rigors of the teaching profession and trying to adjust to the newness of a rural setting, the chances of success are reduced.

A teacher with good general teaching experience probably is in a better position to adjust to a new geographic and cultural milieu. Again, don't automatically delete from consideration the new teacher who has never spent time in a rural setting. Just be aware of the potential drawbacks, make certain the candidate is aware of them, and structure the interview so as to assess the likelihood that he/she will be a stable member of the teaching staff.

Does the candidate see him/herself as responsible for children's learning? Listen for a sense of personal accountability for learning outcomes. If the candidate seems to find fault with outside forces for preventing him/her from teaching successfully, he/she may be unwilling or unable to take responsibility for the learning of the children in the school.

Is the candidate interested in and capable of making a long-term professional commitment? The ideal candidate is one who wants to remain in the teaching profession for the foreseeable future and who wishes to work within the school system for an extended period of time. In consideration of experienced teachers, examine the length of service to previous school districts and the reason(s) for leaving the district.

In reviewing the candidate's resume and support materials, in speaking with the candidate, and in speaking with others about the candidate, be attentive to the degree of "fit" between the candidate's educational philosophy/approach and that of the present school staff.

Mary Cihak Jensen (1987) advocates a healthy diversity among staff members. She notes at the same time, however, that existing staff tend to hire people similar to themselves, even when other candidates might have superior qualifications. There is a need to strike a balance between these extremes. Diversity is healthy, and students benefit from exposure to a range of styles and points of view. At the same time, there is the reality that teachers whose styles are inconsistent with community values tend not be successful in rural schools.

Commitment to one's own professional growth is a desirable attribute in a teacher. Pay attention to the candidate's comments about increasing his/her skills, learning new methodologies, and sharing ideas with others.

Other characteristics identified as desirable for teachers in rural schools include: holding high expectations of oneself and one's students, being goal oriented, having empathy for other people, and having a positive and open attitude in one's interactions with others.

Researchers and rural school administrators also have identified several characteristics shown to be undesirable--for teachers in general and certainly in rural school teachers. Beware, they warn, of people who:

- Are rigid and inflexible in their views and working style
- Are overly concerned with discipline and structure
- Think they have all the answers
- Are burned out
- Are heavily oriented to/reliant upon commercial texts
- Lack self-confidence
- Have made frequent job changes in the past
- Negative in their reaction to the geographical setting

B. Promoting Your School and Community

The rural school administrator must be aware of and adhere to general district policies regarding recruitment and selection, and also attend to the needs of

his/her particular school. Clarity about district policies regarding such matters as moonlighting, residence requirements, probationary periods, relocation expenses, etc. can help to guide the recruitment/selection process and reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings.

The advertisement that is developed to inform and attract potential applicants will have three main elements:

- An accurate description of the job vacancy
- A description of the community and school, including a description of the student population
- Information about regional and job-related side benefits

A complete position description should include information on the general nature of the position and its district context, its dynamic features, required and desired teacher skills and characteristics. In order that all relevant information will be included and presented in a logical order, we recommend use of a position announcement such as that in Appendix 8.

Position descriptions generally should be accompanied by some basic information about the school and community. In advertising positions for rural schools, it is especially important to provide these details. The authorities on teacher recruitment note the importance of "selling" your community and school to prospective applicants (Miller, 1985). As Jensen (1987) points out regarding rural schools in general, "potential applicants may know more about rural school's disadvantages than about the advantages they frequently offer--smaller classes, greater participation in decision making, community support."

A clear and accurate portrayal will call attention to the special nature of the school's setting, highlight its particularly attractive features, and avoid misleading readers as to the nature of the social and educational context. Jorgensen and Epsey (1986) note additional positive aspects of rural schools and communities which may be cited when advertising positions:

- Absence of bureaucratic barriers
- Sense of community and family interdependence with the school
- The right size to give personal attention
- Slower pace of living and working
- Raising children in a more controlled environment

As indicated in Chapter 1, the advantageous aspects of rural school districts can be presented in a manner that utilizes the structure of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Helge and Marrs, 1982).

The advertisement should include information about the geographic setting, the cultural and recreational opportunities available, the cost of living, etc. Perhaps the school is located in a beautiful setting close to fishing, hunting, or skiing areas. Many rural communities are situated in such areas, and while these recreational offerings can be a powerful draw, discussion of them in advertising materials should be approached with caution. Sometimes, out of carelessness or especially if a school has experienced difficulty filling positions, there is a temptation to emphasize the beauty and recreational opportunities of the setting so strongly that the details of the job, school, and community are pushed into the background. While this kind of advertising may attract candidates, it is unlikely to attract appropriate ones. Be sure the job vacancy advertisement focuses first on the position and the school setting, then on the community, and only then provides details about the recreational and other offerings of the geographic location.

C. Outreach and Recruitment Methods

To increase the chances of attracting strong candidates for your position, think about the list of desirable characteristics for teachers in rural schools. Then think about where people with those characteristics are most likely to be found. Send position announcements to universities located in or near rural areas; these often draw students who are from rural backgrounds and who prefer to continue living and working in rural settings. Universities sometimes have courses or field experiences specifically concerned with education in rural areas; these, too, would be promising places to send vacancy announcements and advertising materials.

Educators may find it beneficial to do as industrial leaders do--recruit continually, realizing that ongoing recruitment increases the organization's productivity. Maintaining a good working relationship with university placement officers and with student teacher supervisors will enhance opportunities for recruiting top candidates. Use the recruitment and interview process as an opportunity to not only find out as much as possible about the applicant, but to sell the school district as well. Actively seek out the use of your school as a practicum site for student- teachers.

In addition, incentives have been offered for teachers in high demand. In some states, rural districts attract applicants by promising benefits ranging from bonuses to relocation services to reductions in rent. Some businesses in the

community will cooperate with the school district to provide such incentives as low-interest loans, subsidized rent, guaranteed summer employment, free interview trips, or discounts at restaurants and stores.

Some districts offer graduate school tuition, an array of staff development opportunities and accelerated sabbaticals. It is important to remember that attractive working and living conditions are considered as well. "Districts that provide supportive, stimulating work environments and communities that welcome educators will find teachers when others will not" (Jensen, 1987). Districts can help alleviate the effects of isolation by providing teachers with the time and the means to make trips to more populated areas.

D. Teacher Selection Methods

This section includes additional suggestions of ways to identify the presence or absence of desirable teacher characteristics as you screen and interview candidates.

Research and the practical experience of rural school administrators support the involvement of teachers in the screening and interviewing of applicants. In screening, the committee should select to interview only those applicants whose application materials indicate that they are highly qualified and otherwise suitable for the position. That is, if the recruitment efforts somehow attracted only applicants who are underqualified or borderline cases, do not invite them for an interview (or hire them) just because they are the best among an unsuitable group of possibilities. Waiting and trying again can be frustrating, but experienced administrators find that this is preferable to expending time and energy on inappropriate applicants.

Always conduct an in-person interview which involves the participation of teacher and district representatives and perhaps a community/board member. Administrators from very small school districts with very limited resources may face the temptation to hire an applicant on the basis of good application materials, positive comments from previous supervisors, and an impressive telephone interview. Experienced rural school administrators caution against giving in to this temptation. For one thing, an in-person interview is much more revealing than paper and telephone contact alone.

Participation in "Teacher Fairs" at universities can facilitate several personal interviews with prospective candidates. Although such interviews may be abbreviated, they can be used for initial screening of candidates. In-person interviewing also allows the administrator to make use of the impressions and evaluations of a number of people. Jensen (1987) reminds us, "mistakes in

personnel selection are costly and have long-term effects, and in-person interviewing can reduce the likelihood of such mistakes."

Experts in this area recommend thoroughness. Be certain to check each candidate's references. Talk with principals who have supervised the candidate and, if possible, with teachers who have worked with the candidate. Ask previous supervisors if they would hire the candidate again and ask for their reasons.

Jensen (1987) cites a U.S. Department of Education research report which identifies the following qualities for members of interview committees:

- Alertness to cues
- Ability to make fine distinctions and perceive accurately
- Ability to make immediate and accurate records
- Willingness to use criteria established by the organization
- Ability to suppress biases

There is the likelihood that not all members of the interview group will possess all of these qualities. However, each quality should be represented and each member listened to carefully in his/her area of strength.

The interview format and content will differ greatly from one school to another in accordance with differing selection criteria, committee membership, and needs of the particular school. We do, however, strongly recommend use of a structured interview process. Commercial materials designed to facilitate teacher interviews may be used or adapted to fit local needs.

Rural school administrators have effectively used/adapted such commercial products as the Teacher Perceiver Specialist Training materials developed by Selection Research, Inc., Lincoln, Nebraska, which help schools and districts to select teachers with the qualities desired. Another system administrators have found useful is Project Empathy, developed by the Omaha Public Schools and used to identify effective teaching capabilities in candidates.

Remember, the interview is only one of several measures to consider. It is important, but its importance should not overwhelm the other data on the candidate. "As a single measure," says Jensen (1987), "the interview should be structured to gather the specific information it is best at gathering: indicators of

social competence, commitment, pragmatic problem solving skills, thought processes, and elements of subject matter knowledge."

The interview provides an opportunity for the committee to identify presence or absence of characteristics desirable for teachers in rural schools. Experts also suggest that the interview session be used to inform the candidate about the nature of the school's methods for inducting new teachers. "Personnel directors who clarify their induction strategies to potential teachers report that the most capable candidates are attracted to programs of strong support and high expectations" (Jensen, 1987). This is especially important to candidates seeking teaching positions in rural schools as these teachers can anticipate the need for support and encouragement in a new and probably isolated setting.

Author William Goldstein (1986) encourages interviewers to "think like candidates," that is, be aware of the emotions and tensions candidates are likely to feel and take steps to put them at ease. Top candidates, says Goldstein, will receive multiple offers, and their choice may well be based on how they were treated in interviews.

When committee members have interviewed the candidates, looked at interview results in light of other information, and come to agreement on the top two or three candidates, review these to make the final committee recommendation to the superintendent.

Experienced rural school administrators offer two additional guidelines for the teacher selection process. One of these has to do with time. As with recruitment, selection takes time, therefore, we offer strong encouragement not to give in to time pressures. Be thorough in carrying out each part of the process, and the investment of time and energy will pay off.

Another guideline concerns intuition. Teacher selection is a rational process up to a point, but the administrator and the committee also are encouraged to rely on their "gut" feelings about the suitability of the candidates. If a candidate appears qualified and interested, but something "just doesn't feel right," discuss the concerns with one another and do not hire a person about whom there are serious doubts.

In concluding her suggestions for teacher selection, Jensen (1987) provides a list of recommendations schools and districts can use to improve their selection process. Some of these may be more applicable than others; they are offered as methods which have worked for others:

- Develop written policies for selection
- Treat candidates with fairness and respect
- Train those who select teachers (in order that their choices won't be unduly influenced by factors such as first impressions and personal biases)
- Involve several people in the decision
- Consider a variety of information about candidates
- Learn from success and mistakes; validate your process

Teacher Retention

A. Teacher Induction

The recruitment and selection process just described can help reduce teacher turnover in the school through achieving an optimal match between the school/community setting and the teachers hired. Equally important are the actions taken by the administrator and staff to retain teachers.

Research has shown that the development of an induction program can support beginning teachers by enhancing teacher competency, reduce teacher attrition rates, improve instruction and strengthen the school as an organization. The following are recommendations for an induction program (Jensen, 1987):

- View induction as part of teacher selection and staff development processes. Induction is best seen as the link between recruitment/selection and continuous staff development.
- Share research on the beginning teacher with school administrators, faculty, and the beginning teachers themselves.

Simon Veenman (1984) says in his article, "Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers", that:

> The transition from teacher training to the first teaching job could be a dramatic and traumatic one...reality shock. [generally] indicate[ing] the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life.

In Veenman's (1984) research, he found that classroom discipline was the most seriously perceived problem area of beginning teachers. Motivation of students

ranked second, dealing with individual differences among students was third, and assessing students' work and relations with parents were fourth and fifth most frequently mentioned problems. Aspects of teaching that involved student control and motivation were perceived as the greatest problems for teachers across all experience levels. He further found beginning teachers, observed by independent observers, to be more student-oriented and less inclined to lecture, and they reported fewer problems with teaching.

Becoming aware of common problems that newcomers face is a critical first step. Let new teachers know that it is normal to have feelings of being overwhelmed or disenchanted. That is why induction should include an orientation to the school district philosophy and procedures, evaluation process, training in discipline procedures, classroom management, and other areas of professional improvement (Huling-Austin and Emmer, 1985). Other teacher retention tips include:

- Choose and train coaches, peer observers, instructors and mentor teachers. Research has found that it is helpful if the support teacher teaches the same subject and grade level as the first-year teacher, has a contiguous or nearby classroom, and has a compatible teaching ideology with the first year teacher (Huling-Austin, 1985). Partnerships to support new and veteran teachers can be profitable to both.
- Protect the assignment of new teachers. Provide the first-year teacher with as much preparation time as possible. Balance new teachers' needs for training with their needs for time.
- Ensure that the new teacher has a classroom that is well equipped and materials equal to those of veteran teachers.
- Provide assistants for the new teacher hired late to help with such tasks as assembling material, decorating bulletin boards, moving furniture.
- As an administrator, maintain high visibility during the first few days of classes.
- Increase, rather than decrease, supervision of new teachers. It is important to visit the classroom frequently and have discussions to help the teacher from repeating errors and to support instructional goals.
- Encourage teachers to interact before the school year begins. This can be a luncheon, potluck dinner, cheese and crackers informal gathering, etc.
- Send a personal note to the first-year teacher during the first week. Catch new teachers doing something right and let them hear about it in a personalized, hand-written note. The power of positive reinforcement is recognized by all, but with hectic schedules, it is sometimes overlooked. The first few days of teaching are among the most difficult, and a brief personalized compliment from the principal can mean a great deal to the new as well as the veteran teacher (Huling-Austin, 1985).

Teacher induction, as discussed in the educational literature, most often refers to the efforts made to orient and involve the person who is new to the teaching profession. However, many of the strategies used with beginning teachers can, with some modification, be used profitably with those teachers in new positions. For example, mentoring programs, in which newly hired teachers (whether they are new to the teaching profession or not) are paired with an established teacher or teachers, can be very useful. The mentor(s) can help the new teacher with such things as:

- Understanding the nature and needs of the student population
- Becoming familiar with the instructional program(s)
- Learning ways to relate and communicate effectively with parents and community members
- Learning the school's policies, procedures, norms, traditions
- Learning teaching and classroom approaches which are effective with the students in this school

It is important that those serving as mentors have both good teaching skills and the ability to communicate effectively with the newcomer. Jensen (1987) cites some additional traits which are desirable in a mentor teacher. He/she should be someone who:

- Enjoys the chance to learn from the new teacher and from the helping relationship
- Views working with the newcomer as an opportunity to enhance his/her own skills
- Communicates to the new teacher attitudes and values which fit into the school and community

Larger school systems sometimes provide mentor teacher stipends and release time to create opportunities for them to work with new teachers, compensating them for their efforts. This may or may not be possible in the rural school setting. Some sort of reward/acknowledgment, however, should be offered to those who serve in the mentor role.

Arranging meetings in which teachers can discuss policies, issues, and other matters of concern is another effective way to help new teachers gain understanding and a sense of belonging. Ongoing monthly staff meetings by

specialty areas can foster staff cohesiveness and increase a teacher's investment in remaining in the school and community.

Some schools have weekly meetings with school administrators and new teachers. This provides an opportunity for new staff members to become acquainted with district policies, procedures and values as well as create collegial relationships. The agenda is based on the needs and questions of new teachers.

B. Building Teacher Ties to the School and Community

Induction into a rural school should include induction into the community. Provide to new teachers a community tour and orientation. It is important for the new teacher to understand the history of the community, its customs, primary economic base, values, expectations and personnel resources to be used in the schools.

Induction into the community also should include social gatherings with district representatives and members of the school board. Remember that teachers who leave rural schools often do so because they feel like "outsiders" in one way or another. These school and community induction efforts will go a long way toward dispelling feelings of isolation and apartness.

Housing is often a problem for staff of rural schools, and the rural school administrator is encouraged to work with community members to arrange for suitable housing for new staff members.

C. Professional Growth and Development

The opportunity for professional growth can be a powerful draw during teacher recruitment and selection and can inspire teachers to remain in the school district over time. Rural schools have met with success through offering staff development opportunities in a variety of formats.

The following are suggestions for professional growth programs:

- Provide tuition for courses, money for instructional materials and conferences, and release time for special activities.
- Allow staff members to determine the kinds of staff development they need; then work with them to prioritize needs and set up activities.
- Work with staff to develop individualized professional growth plans.

- Include visits to other schools as part of staff development whereby teachers can gain new perspectives and motivation to try new approaches.
- Be aware of grant opportunities and work with staff to apply for and make use of them.
- Encourage staff participation in teacher exchange programs.
- Arrange for staff to receive training in proven staff development programs, e.g., Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA).
- Be closely involved in observation and supervision of staff. Work with staff members to develop goals and use observation/supervision activities as a means for mutual learning and trust building.
- Help staff set up peer coaching arrangements to improve teaching skills.
- Provide opportunities for collegial interaction and professional discussions.
- Make certain that teacher evaluation includes positive feedback, and be prepared to provide help where performance is weak.

Some districts and school administrators have collaborated with association leaders, cooperating teachers and teacher educators to provide continuous professional development.

D. Administrative Leadership

The literature review, mail survey, in-person interviews, and panel discussion described earlier all identified administrative leadership as a critical factor in teacher retention. Indeed, local school leadership was cited more often than any other element as the reason teachers stayed or left. What actions on the part of the school administrator can increase the likelihood that teachers will stay in their positions? What can be done to retain staff?

Along with competitive wages (which the school administrator may be unable to influence) and opportunities for professional growth, Jensen (1987) cites prestigious and meaningful work and professional working conditions as critical factors in teacher retention. These are areas of need which the administrator can

influence in ways great and small, to make an enormous difference in the professional climate of the school.

Giving teachers recognition for their work is well-documented as a successful method of creating teacher satisfaction and motivation. Experienced rural principals recommend such things as writing notes to teachers acknowledging their efforts and successes, providing them with frequent positive verbal feedback on their work, celebrating their birthdays and providing other kinds of school-wide recognition ceremonies. Honoring teachers for their services can be accomplished by recognizing them at a special luncheon or assembly program. Certificates, flowers, plaques, and letters of commendation are other methods of letting teachers know that they are special and that their work is appreciated. All of these activities can be co-sponsored with parent and community groups.

Submitting articles to the local newspaper recognizing teachers is a great morale builder and also good for positive public relations. Talk positively about the teachers and students every chance possible. "Both self-esteem and affiliation have been shown to be the principle contributors to rural teachers' level of overall satisfaction with their jobs...teachers need to feel important as persons and as recognized, respected, competent professionals" (Haughey, 1983).

To further enhance affiliation and to counteract isolation, rural schools should sponsor or endorse social activities for teachers. Such activities could include potlucks, softball, volleyball, bowling leagues, aerobic exercises, shopping expeditions, card and board games, etc. (Reed and Busby, 1985).

Experienced educators in general, and rural school principals in particular, point to the importance of administrators providing support and encouragement to staff to share their ideas, take on expanded responsibility, and pursue professional growth. The school administrator is in a position to inspire staff to develop its capabilities. Steps taken to do so both hold good teachers and help them to become better teachers. Talented teachers will seek equally talented administrators. "Capable teachers need capable administrators" (Jensen, 1987).

The effective schooling literature of recent years has clarified that successful schools (those in which students have high achievement and positive attitudes and social behavior) often differ from unsuccessful schools in terms of the leadership role taken by the principal. That is, when the principal sees his/her responsibilities as limited to finance, personnel, facilities and public relations, the quality of the school often suffers--the instructional program is not cohesive; students are dissatisfied; teachers leave. When, on the other hand, the principal takes responsibility for guiding the development and implementation of the instructional program, student outcomes and overall school climate are greatly

improved. The successful rural school administrator is a leader who does more than manage the school's programs.

The experience of rural school administrators with this general principle has led them to advocate close involvement with the instructional program in such ways as:

- Spending time in classrooms working with teachers and students
- Working with staff on selecting/developing instructional materials
- Helping ensure that the school's curriculum content and testing program are well aligned

The provision of instructional leadership is an area in which the small, rural school often has the edge over larger systems. The rural administrator is normally quite involved in the educational program, may routinely teach some classes, and is not so overwhelmed with bureaucratic responsibilities as to lose touch with students and their instruction.

Work to maintain open communication with staff. It is important that established methods exist for dealing systematically with issues as they arise in a timely and efficient manner. Regular administrative meetings, conducted with a solution-oriented approach to business matters, will provide a positive setting for dealing with staff concerns. It is important to provide efficient systems for using teachers' professional judgment.

Experienced rural school administrators say that "the job should be taken seriously," but add that "one should not take her/himself too seriously." Don't take personally the issues that arise in the school. Depersonalize problems, and be flexible and open to staff feedback.

In dealings with the community, experienced administrators from rural schools recommend seeking a warm and open school/community relationship while also keeping it on a professional level.

In dealings with students, work to instill a sense of school spirit and pride. Close participation in the instructional program will help foster a positive climate and good relationships with students. Work to develop programs which will foster student leadership qualities. Communicate--and ensure that the staff also communicates--high expectations for student learning and behavior. Develop and conduct a firm, fair discipline program.

Work to develop a network for communication and support in dealings with other administrators in the region. If one is an administrator below the level of superintendent, work to establish a supportive relationship with the district superintendent and other district staff.

These kinds of relationships help create the sort of professional environment wherein school staff tend to stay. They know they are valued professionally and personally, and they know they work in a context of goodwill and good communications among all groups connected with the school.

Jensen (1987) points out, "Capable candidates seek effective schools. Schools that offer good working conditions...attract outstanding educators. Better yet, they keep outstanding educators." We remind the reader that good schools and good teachers go together.

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Appendix 8

DESCRIPTION OF POSITION VACANCY

Mission statement of the district:

A. General Nature of the Position

1. Broad goals of the district
2. Organizational structure of the district, and of the particular building where the vacancy exists
3. Working conditions
4. General expectations of the teacher:
   a. In the classroom
   b. In relationships with other staff members and administrators
   c. In relationships with students, parents and the community

B. Dynamic Features of the Position

1. What is likely to be more important at the beginning of the assignment?
2. What aspects of the assignment are likely to change?
3. How will the position be affected by other people?
4. What is the nature of the students?
5. How will the community influence this position?

C. Teacher Behaviors/Skills

1. Required
   a. In the classroom
   b. In relationship to supervisors

Appendix B

(Continued)

c. In relationships with others in the district and at other intermediate service agencies such as Education Service District (ESD) or County Superintendents

d. In relationships outside the school system

2. Desired

a. In the classroom

b. In relationship to supervisors

c. In relationships with others in the district

d. In relationships outside the school system

D. Teacher Characteristics Sought

1. Aptitude

2. Social

3. Interests

E. Desired Preparation and Experience

1. College preparation

2. Certification

3. Teaching experience

F. Compensation

1. Number of days in contract

2. Salary

3. Fringe benefits

Adapted from: Recruiting Special Education Personnel for Iowa Schools, by Sue Jorgensen and Linda Epsey. Mountain Plains, IA: Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, Drake University, 1986, pp. 28-29.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Robert R. Rath, Executive Director
Ethel Simon-McWilliams, Associate Director

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Teacher
Coeur d'Alene School District (Idaho)

Catalino Cantero
Assistant to the Secretary for Education
Federated States of Micronesia

William Demmert
Alaska Commissioner of Education

Jean M. Dobashi
Teacher
Kauai High/Intermediate School (Hawaii)

John Erickson
Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction

Jerry L. Evans
Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction

James E. Harris
First Interstate Bank, Portland

Richard L. Hart
Dean, College of Education
Boise State University (Idaho)

Marlys Henderson
Teacher
Fairbanks School District (Alaska)

William Hensley
Northwest Alaska Native Association

Shirley Holloway
Curriculum Coordinator
North Slope Borough School District (Alaska)

Jerry Jacobson
Superintendent
Idaho Falls School District (Idaho)

Spike Jorgensen
Superintendent
Alaska Gateway School District

Homer Kearns
Superintendent
Salem-Keizer School District (Oregon)

Nancy Keenan
Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction

John Kohl
College of Education
Montana State University

Dale Lambert
Teacher
Eastmont School District (Washington)

Rosiland Lund
Teacher
Hillsboro Union High School District (Oregon)

Joe McCracken
Superintendent
Lockwood Elementary District (Montana)

Zola McMurray
Business Woman
Lewiston, Idaho

G. Angela Nagengast
Teacher
Great Falls High School (Montana)

Nancy W. Oltman
Director, EEO/Affirmative Action
Weyerhaeuser Company (Washington)

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Superintendent
Independent District of Boise (Idaho)

Dennis Ray (Secretary-Treasurer)
Superintendent
Walla Walla School District (Washington)

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Commissioner of Education
Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

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Port Orchard, Washington

James Scott
Headmaster
Catlin Gabel School
Portland (Oregon)

Anita Sukola
Acting Director of Education
Guam Department of Education

Brian Talbot
Superintendent
Educational Service District 101
Spokane (Washington)

Charles Toguchi
Superintendent
Hawaii Department of Education

Lealofi Uiagelelei
Director of Education
Government of American Samoa

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 275-9500
GTE: NWRELLAB
FAX: (503) 275-9489

Center for the Advancement of Pacific Education
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 533-1748
GTE: PRELLAB
FAX: (808) 523-1741

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